DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 044 422 24 TE 500 623

AUTHOR Wilcox, Thomas W.
TITLE A Comprehensive Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English in the United States.
INSTITUTION Connecticut Univ., Storrs.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO BR-6-1285
PUB DATE 14 May 70
CONTRACT OEC-3-7-001285-2049
NOTE 230p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$1.00 HC-$11.60
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Organization, *Colleges, Course Organization, English Curriculum, English Departments, *English Instruction, English Literature, English Programs, Freshmen, Instructional Staff, Language Instruction, Program Evaluation, Statistical Data, *Surveys, Tables (Data), *Undergraduate Study, *Universities

ABSTRACT

This survey, the result of a four-year study, classifies schools by size, geographical location, and type. Chapter one examines the composition, power, and nature of the English department. This includes description of its procedures for recruiting new faculty members and for awarding promotion and tenure, and an examination of teaching loads. The second chapter surveys the function and service obligations of the department. The most important of these, freshman English, is discussed at length. Other programs for non-majors and the department's contribution to the training of teachers are then reviewed. Chapter three is concerned with the English major and programs for his training. Plans and requirements for the major are analyzed, and concepts of the major are defined. Special provisions for majors, including honors programs, are then examined. The final chapter presents general conclusions about the problems confronting English departments. The general questionnaire used in the survey is contained in the report. Statistical support for specific topics discussed throughout the survey is provided in more than 90 tables. (Author/RL)

Final Report

Project No. 6-1285
Contract No. OEC 3-7-001285-2049

A Comprehensive Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English in the United States

Thomas W. Wilcox

University of Connecticut

Storrs, Connecticut 06268

May 14, 1970

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Bureau of Research

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES

SUMMARY

This document is the result of a four-year study involving an extensive questionnaire and, in some cases, on-the-spot interviewing. In interpreting the evidence, schools were classified by size, geographical location, and type; an attempt was made to represent different divisions equally. Examined in this report are the composition, power, and nature of the department (chapter 1), the function and obligations of the department (chapter 2), and the English major and programs for his training (chapter 3). Chapter 4 draws general conclusions about the problems facing English departments.

The teaching of English to undergraduates is one of the two or three largest enterprises in American higher education, and apparently the size of the enterprise is not diminishing. There have been few major innovations in the structure of undergraduate English in the last two or three decades, although there are some individual programs which show promise. Among the most notable is the addition of courses in black literature and the film. In general, however, there is evidence of strong desire among students and teachers for more far-reaching changes.

The problems mentioned most often in English departments include (1) how to reconcile institutional procedures with the teaching of a subject which is largely inimical to institutions, (2) how to determine what constitutes good teaching of English, and (3) how to define and defend English as a discipline.

A Comprehensive Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English in the United States

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1965 a group of educators who were then members of the College Section Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English decided to undertake the first comprehensive review of the teaching of English to American undergraduates. Their motive was quite simple: they thought their profession and the academic community as a whole might benefit from knowing precisely what English teachers were doing at the undergraduate level. Members of the committee knew from their own experience that discussions in departmental meetings and at regional and national conferences were often impoverished or rendered futile by a lack of accurate information. Men could and did debate such matters as teaching loads and requirements for the major, but no one really knew how many departments had which loads or required which courses of their majors. No one could speak with assurance about trends in undergraduate English, because no reliable description of past and present practices was available. The College Section Committee thought it was high time that someone should seek out and compose the facts about the English department and its contribution to undergraduate education in America. Accordingly it proposed to undertake a systematic study of the whole of undergraduate English in the United States. Its proposal was adopted by the Executive Committee of NCTE and endorsed by the Modern Language Association and its affiliate, the Association of Departments of English. The United States Office of Education agreed to meet the considerable cost of this large enterprise, and thus the National Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English was born. The document which follows is the final report on that survey, which took four years to complete.

How the Survey Was Conducted

An Advisory Committee was appointed to design and supervise the survey. That committee consisted of Glenn Leggett, Grinnell College,

Chairman; Robert Daniel, Kenyon College; Leonard F. Dean, New York University; John H. Fisher, Executive Secretary, MLA; Gerhart Friedrich, California State Colleges; Bruce Harkness, Kent State University; James R. Squire, then Executive Secretary, NCTE; William S. Ward, University of Kentucky. Thomas W. Wilcox of the University of Connecticut was Director of the survey, and William C. Budd of Western Washington State College was Consultant.

Preliminary Investigations. It was first necessary to determine just what the survey should attempt to determine--that is, to define its scope and to decide what questions should be posed, what kinds of information should be sought. After a meeting of the Advisory Committee at which the aims of the survey were discussed, the Director visited some fifteen departments of English in colleges and universities of different kinds in different parts of the country to ask their members what they would look for if they were conducting an investigation of this kind. From these deliberations and consultations a preliminary agenda for the survey emerged. It included many items which pertain to the operations of the department itself as well as to its programs for undergraduates, because it was clear that the former could not be separated from the latter.

Defining the Universe of the Survey. For purely practical reasons, it was decided that the survey should limit its attention to those colleges and universities which offered four-year programs in English. The Committee was well aware of the important role the junior and community colleges play in the education of American undergraduates and of the close relationship between their programs and those of the four-year institutions. But the compass of the survey had to be limited to a manageable size, and for this reason alone the two-year colleges were excluded from its purview.[1] Nor would this study examine graduate programs, except as they impinged on and conditioned programs for undergraduates.[2]

We discovered, to our surprise, that no single, comprehensive list of American colleges and universities which offer four-year programs in English was available. Neither the American Council on Education's American Universities and Colleges nor the MLA's list of "Chairmen of Four-Year Colleges and Universities" was perfectly accurate and complete. It was necessary, therefore, to prepare such a list specifically for the purposes of the survey. This we did by collating all existing lists and directories and by mailing several hundred letters of inquiry to departments about whose programs there was some doubt. Finally we established that at that date (the fall of 1965) the universe we had elected to survey consisted of exactly 1,320 colleges and universities. Among them were institutions of many sizes and kinds: colleges with enrollments of less than 100,

---

[1]Since then the MLA has inaugurated its National Study of English in the Junior College, and the findings of that survey should be directly comparable with ours at many points.

[2]Graduate programs in English have since been surveyed by Don Cameron Allen, who reported his findings in The Ph.D. in English and American Literature (New York, 1968).

universities with enrollments of over 20,000; sectarian colleges of all types, including seminaries and bible schools; military academies; art schools; engineering schools; and schools for the deaf. All of them had this much in common, however: they offered courses in English at all undergraduate level: (though not all of them offered the major in English). Throughout the report which follows, therefore, the phrase "all schools" or "all departments" refers to every institution of higher learning in the United States which provided instruction in English for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors in 1965.

Interviews. We began our investigation by proceeding directly into the field, conducting on-the-spot interviews at sixty-three colleges and universities throughout the nation in an effort to define recurrent patterns in undergraduate programs and to identify the major concerns of college English departments today. The schools we visited were chosen because their undergraduate programs in English were reported to be of unusually high quality, unusually effective, or unusually promising. To find such exemplary programs we consulted some 200 widely experienced members of the profession, asking each to nominate departments of English whose programs seemed especially worthy of close inspection. It should be emphasized that the departments which were selected by this somewhat unsystematic procedure did not comprise a representative sample of the whole, nor were they limited to an elite group of the most prestigious departments in the land. At this point in our study we were looking for examples of effective or dedicated teaching, and our search led us to such atypical but noteworthy institutions as a small sectarian college for women and a predominantly Negro university in the South, as well as to most of the better known schools in the country.

We prepared for our interviews by sending each of the departments we asked to visit a list of topics we hoped to discuss and questions we planned to ask. Almost every department responded with great hospitality and good will. Many assembled masses of information and materials especially for the survey; all submitted graciously to our lengthy interrogations. On several campuses we interviewed not only members of the English department (at all ranks) but also administrators and students. At a few institutions our schedules permitted us to attend classes and faculty meetings. We discovered that one can learn a great deal about a department and its programs in a day of intensive interviews, and, by the end of the ten months we devoted to such interviews, we found we had acquired an enormous fund of professional lore. Most of the illustrative examples cited in our report were collected during this phase of our study, in which we completed what may have been the most extensive tour of American departments of English ever conducted.

The General Questionnaire. Although our interviews had taken us to sixty-three colleges and universities in twenty-six states (and even to Canada, where we visited a brand new university to observe an undergraduate program in the making), we knew we had not yet acquired a panoramic view of our subject. That could be done only by mail: no investigator could possibly visit all the 1,320 schools on our list or even an adequate sample of the whole. Accordingly, we set about to devise an instrument which would elicit complete and reliable information on national practices in those matters which our interviews had revealed to be of greatest importance to departments of English. Here we were wisely counseled by our Consultant, William C. Budd of Western Washington State College, by the Survey Research Center of the

University of Michigan, and by Jerold Heiss of the Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut. These experts in surveying methods advised us to address our comprehensive questionnaire (which they helped to compose) not to every department on our list but to a scientifically selected sample of the universe of our survey.[3] It was agreed that a random sample of 300 departments would be large enough for our purposes. We drew such a sample and analyzed it to make sure it contained at least 30 schools of each major type (for example, small, non-coeducational, sectarian colleges or medium-sized, public universities), so that we could speak with authority about each kind. Every class was found to be represented in sufficient number, and we were assured that our sample would serve as a true microcosm of the universe we wished to examine.

The questionnaire itself was pretested on a number of departments and reviewed at a two-day meeting of the Advisory Committee. We made every effort to eliminate unnecessary questions and to ensure that our probe would yield a complete anatomy of each department which replied. The final version of this document may be found in the Appendix. As mailed to the departments in our sample it ran to thirty-nine pages, and it made great demands on those who completed it. In partial recognition of their efforts, we enclosed an honorarium of $25 with each questionnaire.

The response was astonishing. Two hundred eighty-four departments or 94.6 percent of our sample returned the questionnaire. Not all of them answered every question, because not all our questions applied to every department and its program. (For example, those departments which did not offer the major had no answers to Part III.) No one showed annoyance with the questionnaire, however, and most replies were thoughtful, candid, and full. The very high degree of response means, of course, that the information we gleaned from the replies should be highly accurate and reliable.

In an effort to avoid dictating replies we had deliberately posed certain large questions (for example, "What accomplishments and orders of knowledge do you expect your majors to have when they graduate?") which invited perfectly free and therefore widely varying responses. Each answer had to be coded so that it could be recorded on tabulator cards. The process of classification inevitably resulted in some oversimplification and distortion, but we found that it is quite possible to code replies to even the most general of questions. Those who performed the task were especially attentive to significant anomalies, and most of these are noted in our report.

Independent Variables. We had classified the schools in our sample and their departments of English according to the following variables:

1. Size of undergraduate enrollment. We decided to call schools with undergraduate enrollments of less than 1,500 "small," schools with 1,501 to 2,500 undergraduates "medium-sized," and those with over 2,500 "large." These distinctions were arbitrary, of course, but our interviews (which had taken us to schools of all three sizes) indicated that the character of schools and, in some respects, their programs for undergraduates begin to change at about those points. The distribution of sizes among all depart-

---

[3] The reasons for following this procedure are reviewed in the course of our discussion of student evaluations. See page 48.

ments in our sample is given on page 3.

2. Type of control. Schools were designated "public," "private," or "sectarian" on the basis of information supplied in the ninth edition of the ACE's American Universities and Colleges, in other directories, or by the schools themselves. The term "sectarian" was applied only to those institutions which were said to be controlled by a church, not to those which were said to be "affiliated" with a church. Thus, Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, which appeared in our sample, was designated "private" even though it is "affiliated with the United Church of Christ." The distribution of the three types among all schools in our sample was as follows:[4]

	percent of schools in sample
Public	37.1
Private	34.3
Sectarian	27.9

Two federally controlled schools appeared in our sample: the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, and the United States Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut.

3. Geographical location. In order to define regional differences, we divided the nation into five sections: North Atlantic (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware); Great Lakes and Plains (Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas); Southeast (Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida); South Central (Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas); West and Southwest (Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and California.)[5] The geographical distribution of the schools in our sample was as follows:

---

[4]These percentages and those which follow in this discussion of independent variables must apply as well to the whole universe of the survey, of course. Thus, we may say that about a third of all schools which offer four-year programs in English are private institutions, about 3 percent are located in the Great Lakes area, about 11 percent award the Ph.D., and so forth. Totals in this and other columns will only approximate 100 percent because of rounding off.

[5]Here we followed the precedent of an earlier survey which resulted in Donald R. Tuttle and Helen O'Leary's report, Curriculum Patterns in English: Undergraduate Requirements for the Major in English (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Office of Education, 1965).

	percent of schools in sample
North Atlantic	28.6
Great Lakes and Plains	30.4
Southeast	18.2
South Central	8.2
West and Southwest	13.9

Two schools in the sample are located in other states: the University of Alaska and Chaminade College of Honolulu.

4. Coeducational or non-coeducational. Of the schools in our sample, 78.2 percent are coeducational institutions, 21.8 percent are non-coeducational.

5. Graduate programs. Of the schools in our sample, 60.4 percent offer instruction only at the undergraduate level; they have no graduate programs. Among those which do provide graduate courses, the distribution of degree programs is as follows:

	percent of all schools in sample
M.A.	17.5
Master of Arts in Teaching	8.2
Ph.D.	11.4
Other	2.1
No Answer	.4

6. Academic calendars. Differences in undergraduate programs--especially in credits awarded or required--may often be attributed to differences in academic calendars. Following are the percentages of schools in our sample which have the most common calendars:

	percent of schools in sample
Semester	77.5
Quarter	16.8
Trimester	5.4
Other	0.4

Each fact we derived from the responses to our questionnaire could be analyzed or refined with reference to these independent variables. Having ascertained that 52 percent of all college English teachers above the rank of instructor

have the Ph.D., for example, we could then determine the average percentage who have that degree at schools of different sizes and kinds, in different parts of the country, with graduate programs or without, and with one or another academic calendar. All but the most obviously irrelevant correlations were computed, but only those which produced significant statistics are included in our report.

The Limitations of the Survey

The original aim of our project was to provide a perfectly comprehensive description of undergraduate English in the United States. We now see that that ambition was somewhat naive, that no survey can be perfectly comprehensive, if only because the object of its scrutiny will not stand still to be observed. No doubt some of the findings presented in the pages which follow will be obsolete by the time this report is published. At present, however, undergraduate English does not seem to be changing very rapidly despite the recent upheavals on the campus and the clamor for reforms (see page 185), and therefore the statistics and other evidence we present may remain accurate for several years to come.[6] At the very least they should serve as points of reference against which change can be measured.

We had also hoped to arrive at a simple, unequivocal answer to the question which was most often put to us as we made our way around the country: "How well is English being taught to American undergraduates? Is our enterprise in a state of health, or is it moribund and indefensible? Can one say that college teachers of English are doing the job they ought to be doing?" Early in the first phase of our investigation, however, it became apparent that we would never be able to reduce all our observations and information to a single, comprehensive evaluation of the profession and its programs for undergraduates. For the very reasons that it is difficult or impossible for departments to determine just how effectively each of their members is teaching (reasons we review below), it is beyond the competence of a survey to determine precisely how effective individual pro-

---

[6]This observation is supported by the findings of another recent study. In Undergraduate Curriculum Trends (Washington, D. C.: ACE, 1969), Paul L. Dressel and Frances H. DeLisle come to the following conclusion:

> Despite all the talk about innovation, undergraduate curricular requirements, as a whole, have changed remarkably little in ten years. In many cases, the most that could be said of a particular institution was that its curriculum had been renovated--that is, requirements were restated in terms of new patterns of organization and course offerings and updated to recognize the rights of newer disciplines to a place in the sun. One suspects that, in some cases, this latter consideration rather than a real concern for flexibility may have motivated a move from specific course or discipline requirements to broader distribution requirements. In many cases, the minor changes in requirements, amounting to no more than a reshuffling of credits, can only be characterized as tinkering, although one can imagine faculties spending many hours on these pointless decisions. [p. 75]

Most of this statement could probably be applied, mutatis mutandis, to English departments and their programs for undergraduates.

grams--not to speak of national practices--may be. But our survey has established many facts which must be taken into account if such an evaluation is to be made, and throughout our report we have not hesitated to offer our own interpretations of those facts--to editorialize, if you will. Others will construe our findings differently and will come to different conclusions about the state of undergraduate English. We will be pleased if they do, especially if they make their conclusions known. We should be disappointed if our report did not provoke debate--even controversy--among those who share our concern for the welfare of undergraduate English.

The Plan of the Report

The document which follows is divided into three sections and a concluding chapter. It proceeds from a description of the English department and its professional practices, through an analysis of the programs and courses departments offer to non-specialists, to a discussion of programs for the major.

In Chapter I we anatomize the department itself: what is it, how is it composed, what powers does it have? We then describe its procedures for recruiting new members, for awarding promotions and tenure, and for conducting the rest of its business. We conclude with an examination of teaching loads.

In Chapter II we consider the general function of the department and its service obligations. The most important of these, freshman English, is discussed at length. Other programs for non-majors and the department's contribution to the training of teachers are then reviewed.

In Chapter III we turn to the English major and programs provided for him. Plans and requirements for the major are analyzed, and concepts of the major are defined. Special provisions for majors, including honors programs, are then examined.

In our final chapter we present some observations on problems which now confront the profession as it struggles to sustain and to improve its programs for undergraduates.

Acknowledgements

The Director expresses his gratitude to the many persons who helped to conduct the survey and to prepare this report. The members of the survey's Advisory Committee provided invaluable counsel and encouragement. Officers of NCTE and MLA--especially James R. Squire, Robert F. Hogan, and Mary T. Gerhart of the former and Michael F. Shugrue of the latter--were unfailingly cooperative and patient. Our technical advisors, William C. Budd and Jerold Heiss, prevented our committing numerous errors. Arthur Applebee generously provided editorial assistance. And the following members of the survey's staff labored to prepare our findings: Margery Banks, Barbara Churchill, Erben Cook III, Patricia W. Cook, Dorothy Peckham, David Thomen, and Willard Thomen.

Special thanks are due to Darleen B. Wilcox, who suffered much and contributed much.

CHAPTER I

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Identity

The department of English is a separate organizational entity, all members of which teach English or related subjects, at 81.1 percent of American colleges and universities. At the remaining 18.9 percent, those who teach English join teachers of other disciplines--the foreign languages, history, or philosophy, for example--in consolidated departments. Where such amalgamations occur they are explained as follows: smallness of school (42.3 percent of all cases); administrative convenience (19.2 percent); historical accident (7.7 percent); common programs (3.8 percent); other, special reasons (15.4 percent). The resulting hybrid is usually called either the Department of Humanities or the Department of Language and Literature, but other terms such as the Department of Language Arts and the Department of Communications are also used. The undergraduate programs in English offered by amalgamated departments do not differ significantly from those offered by the more common integral departments of English: the number of interdisciplinary courses is no greater, nor are there more courses in comparative literature. In short, where English is yoked with other disciplines the union is usually a marriage of convenience rather than a consequence of some radical revision of the conventional institutional structure.

On some campuses--10.8 percent, to be exact--there is more than one department of English or staff of English teachers. Most of these institutions are universities at which certain duties which normally devolve to the department of English have been delegated to other departments or at which one or more of the technical schools offers its own specially designed program in English. Thus English as a second language is taught by members of the Department of Foreign Languages at Lewis and Clark University; remedial English is taught by an entirely separate staff throughout the University of California system; the School of Business has its own program at Fordham University; and on several campuses the department or school of education offers courses in English for its majors. At both the University of Colorado and the University of Virginia the College of Engineering maintains a staff of specially qualified instructors who conduct courses in English appropriate to the needs and interests of technologically minded students. And at the University of Minnesota English is taught by four separate faculty groups: the Division of Literature, Speech, and Writing (General College); the Program in Communication; the Department of Rhetoric (Schools of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics); and the Department of English. Such Balkanization is rare, however; on most campuses the English department remains a single, discrete component of the institutional structure. It enjoys the status of a separate discipline, and although there is evidence to suggest that it may soon feel the need to divest itself of some of its functions and prerogatives, it has not yet begun to do so.

TABLE 1

The Relative Size of the English Department

	English Largest	English Tied for Largest	Departments Larger than English: Education	Music	Religion	Phys. Sci.	Social Studies	Foreign Languages	Other**
Public	79.0	1.0	9.5	1.0	0	6.7	4.8	2.0	14.4
Private	62.0	7.6	3.2	7.6	4.3	4.3	4.3	5.4	8.7
Sectarian	58.7	6.7	10.4	9.1	11.7	1.3	2.6	5.2	13.0
Small***	83.0	1.1	16.0	14.7	13.6	8.0	8.0	10.2	25.8
Medium***	72.5	5.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	0	12.5
Large***	56.[illegible]	6.9	4.9	0.7	0	2.8	2.1	1.4	3.5
Coed	74.8	4.0	8.5	5.5	4.5	5.0	4.0	3.5	8.5
Non-Coed	55.0	10.0	8.3	6.7	6.7	3.4	5.0	6.7	27.0
Without graduate programs in English	59.9	6.2	6.2	1.2	0	1.9	1.9	1.9	9.3
With graduate programs in English	79.4	2.8	13.1	11.2	11.2	8.4	7.5	7.5	31.9
ALL	67.6	4.8	8.1	5.5	4.8	4.4	4.0	4.0	18.9

*Totals may exceed 100 percent because of multiple answers.

**Other departments which exceed English in size on a few campuses: philosophy, engineering, mathematics, physical education, classics, life sciences, nursing, psychology, political science, and history.

***Throughout this report the terms "small," "medium," and "large" refer to total undergraduate enrollments.

Small = up to 1,500
Medium = 1,501 to 2,500
Large = over 2,500

Relative Size

The department of English is the largest department in number of full-time members on 67.6 percent of American college and university campuses, and on another 4.8 percent it is tied for largest. Table 1 shows, however, that the relative size of the English department varies significantly among institutions of different sizes and types.

The relative size of the English department cannot be ascribed to popularity alone, of course; very few other departments are obliged as English is to staff freshman and sophomore courses which are required of most students or which satisfy "group requirements." The service obligations of the English department and its participation in general programs for lower division students may account for as much as half its size. If it were not entrusted with a large captive audience, its size might equal those of such departments as psychology and history.

Size in Relation to Enrollments. English departments in American colleges and universities range in size from one to about one hundred full-time members. The largest department known to us is that at the Champaign-Urbana campus of the University of Illinois, which reported a size of 99 5/6 full-time equivalents in 1967. The distribution of sizes among all departments is given in Table 2. (In this table, as in others, totals may only approximate 100 percent because of rounding.) Thus, exactly one-half of all

TABLE 2

Distribution of English Departments of Each Size

Number of Teachers	Percent of All Departments
0-4	18.2
5-9	31.8
10-14	14.3
15-19	7.9
20-24	6.1
25-29	6.8
30-34	3.2
35-39	2.9
40-44	1.8
45-59	3.2
60 and up	3.9

departments have fewer than ten members, 64.3 percent have fewer than fifteen, and 15 percent have more than thirty members. The 1,320 American colleges and universities which offered four-year programs in English in 1967 employed approximately 21,000 full-time teachers of English. The percentages of this number employed by institutions of different sizes and kinds are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Full-Time Teachers by Institution

	Percentages of All Full-Time Teachers
Small	21.1
Medium	13.0
Large	65.8
Public	63.2
Private	24.1
Sectarian	12.5
Small Public	3.7
Small Private	10.0
Small Sectarian	7.5
Medium Public	4.0
Medium Private	6.0
Medium Sectarian	3.3
Large Public	55.6
Large Private	8.6
Large Sectarian	1.7

Some sense of the English department's size in relation to the institution's total undergraduate enrollment is conveyed by Table 4.

TABLE 4

Department Size in Relation to Undergraduate Enrollment

Total Undergraduate Enrollment	Average Number of Full-Time English Teachers
Under 301	2.1
301-600	4.6
601-1,000	6.3
1,001-1,500	8.7
1,501-2,000	12.6
2,001-2,500	17.2
2,501-3,000	22.6
3,001-8,000	27.9
8,001-12,000	41.4
Over 12,000	63.3

These figures may enable us to identify gross anomalies--to say, for example, that an English department of twenty in a school which has 3,500 undergraduates is probably understaffed--but they do not tell us precisely how large a given department should be. And, indeed, no simple, practical formula for determining the proper size of a department can be devised. So much depends on such variables as the department's normal teaching load, the size of its classes, the demand for its major, and the extent of its commitment to graduate education that it would be difficult and probably futile to prescribe an "optimum ratio" of English teachers to undergraduate enrollments for all institutions. Very few departments calculate their needs and regulate their size by applying such a formula; most add positions more or less haphazardly as student demand increases and as additional salaries are provided by the administration. Even such burgeoning departments as that at the State University of New York at Buffalo (which expected to expand from the 63 members it had in 1967 to 140 in 1970) do not proceed according to a carefully planned schedule of growth; instead, they must annually appeal to their deans and provosts for a share of what new funds become available. Only 7 percent of all English departments have fixed "tables of organization" or specified quotas for each rank, and although one hears references to "master plans" and "long-range projections" at such institutions as the California State Colleges, the actual size of the English department is often conditioned by such extra-academic influences as the disposition of the governor and the state of the general economy. In short, the size of the department of English is usually determined by local circumstances and contingencies; it is seldom a consequence of methodical computation.

The Composition of the Department

All English departments, except a very few in certain sectarian institutions, have hierarchical structures. Not all identify their members by rank: at Bennington College, for example, there are no distinctions of rank, and all of the eighteen teachers who compose the Department of Language and Literature are known as "instructors" or "members of the faculty." But even at such egalitarian institutions (less than 1 percent of all those offering four-year programs in English), teachers are variously rewarded for their services, and thus an economic, if not a titular, hierarchy obtains.

The conventional titles "Professor," "Associate Professor," and "Instructor" are used to designate the principal ranks at over 98 percent of American colleges and universities. The distribution of English teachers among these ranks varies greatly among departments, but Table 5 shows the average of percentages at each rank in departments of all kinds throughout the nation. Many college administrators and some department chairmen suppose that the hierarchical structure of a department should be pyramidal, that a process of natural selection should allow only a small percentage of teachers to reach the top. The statistics quoted in Table 5 reveal, however, that this ideal configuration is seldom achieved in today's departments of English. Just as it is difficult to regulate the growth of a department--to assure, that is, that its size will always conform to some

careful calculation of its needs--so it is difficult to prevent a disproportionate distribution of its members among the several ranks. Two kinds of disproportion, top-heaviness and bottom-heaviness, are most common among departments of English, and it is instructive to examine the causes of each.

TABLE 5

Distribution of Ranks within the Department

Rank	Average Percentage of Full-Time Members of the English Department
Professor	20.8
Associate professor	18.6
Assistant professor	33.9
Instructor	26.5
Other*	0.9

*Includes such special ranks as lecturer and visiting professor but not part-time members.

Top-Heaviness. In some departments over half the members are professors or associate professors. At the University of Chicago, for example, there are twenty-two professors of English and ten associate professors (including four lecturers at this level), but only fourteen assistant professors and four instructors. Several other departments--at Yale, Haverford, DePauw, Grinnell, Kenyon, Beloit, Mills, and Pomona, to name but a few--are similarly top-heavy. Many of these are relatively small departments, and, as Table 6 shows, top-heaviness seems to be somewhat more common in small schools than in medium-sized or large.

TABLE 6

Distribution of Top-Heavy Departments

Enrollment	Percentage of Departments*
Small	37.1
Medium	33.3
Large	14.9
ALL	30.7

*That is, over half the department's members are professors or associate professors.

If small departments find themselves overloaded at the top, it is probably because they are especially vulnerable to the most common causes of such imbalance. Those causes are:

1. Many teachers of English find their work and the circumstances under which they teach reasonably congenial (or they find, after their first ten years as college teachers, that their services are not in great demand elsewhere), and so they devote their professional careers to rising in the hierarchies of the departments to which they are committed. Because their performances are unimpeachable they cannot--and, in most cases, should not--be denied promotion. Thus they rise to the top, and if there are many of the same generation in one department, that department becomes top-heavy. This is precisely what has happened at several excellent small colleges whose English teachers have no desire to leave and every right to expect promotion.

2. Promotions are sometimes awarded in lieu of financial rewards, with the result that the departments become overloaded and underpaid. This practice, which inevitably devalues the upper ranks, is common at impecunious institutions. Lacking funds to provide regular increments or to meet offers from outside, administrators resort to bestowing early promotions without corresponding raises in salary. Sooner or later this illusory procedure results in a glut at the top.

3. In recent years the concept and significance of the professorship, the associate professorship, and the assistant professorship have been liberalized or redefined at many institutions, with the result that department members now qualify more readily for early promotion to the upper ranks.[1] As one department chairman said in an interview, "In the past you had to publish a book to be promoted to Associate; now you just have to stay around long enough." No doubt this willingness to waive or to relax requirements may be attributed in part to the shortage of competent teachers and to the

---

[1] Don Cameron Allen comments on this phenomenon in his report, The Ph.D. in English and American Literature (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1968, p. 36):

> Forty years ago a Ph.D. in English was very successful if he managed to reach a full professorship at something more than a freshwater college by the age of forty or forty-five. The recent recipients of the Ph.D. have, in their ascent of the educational ladder, gained rungs over their seniors. More than three hundred of them, or 17.4 percent, are already at the top; and more than six hundred of them, or 35.9 percent, have arrived at an associate professorship, the rank that suggests that its holder is "going to make it." Those who graduated in the classes from 1960 through 1965 have done a little better in the climb than those who finished in the earlier five-year period.

competition for well-qualified personnel which prevailed until very recently; in a sellers' market employers cannot afford to insist on standards and policies which may seem arbitrary and oppressive to those whose services they wish to retain.

It seems more probable, however, that this redefinition of rank is a consequence of the general growth of higher education in America: with more students demanding more instruction, departments grow and find more occasions for rewarding good service with promotion. It may be that the whole hierarchy of academic rank is being translated upwards, that what was formerly meant by "Assistant Professor" is now being designated by "Associate Professor," and so on. The recent creation of a kind of super-rank, variously titled "Distinguished Professor" or "University Professor," the establishing of several highly endowed chairs for senior professors, and the extension of salary scales at some state universities to include such top categories as "maximum plus one" suggest that another story--or at least a penthouse--is being added to the conventional structure and that what now seems a disproportion may soon seem a normal, appropriate distribution of teachers by rank.

Top-heaviness impairs a department and its program only when it causes clogging and stagnation. Many good departments of English now have more professors than assistant professors, and this imbalance seems to have little adverse effect on their program for undergraduates. If courses are not rotated, however, if junior members are prevented from exercising their fresh competence and enthusiasm, and if their view from the bottom of the hierarchy is bleak or blocked, top-heaviness may be ruinous to morale and may seriously affect the quality of instruction offered to students.

Bottom-Heaviness. In some departments over three-quarters of the members are instructors or assistant professors. At one state university in the Midwest, for example, the English department consists of 83 full-time teachers, 77 percent of whom are below the rank of associate professor. (This department also employs 24 graduate teaching assistants.) At another large public institution the 41 full-time members are "assisted" by 157 part-time teachers. Such imbalance can only mean, of course, that these departments have become over-dependent on the inexpensive services of inexperienced teachers. A majority of their undergraduate courses (including over 90 percent of their freshman programs) are taught by junior members, temporary appointees, and apprentice teachers. To redress the balance and redistribute teaching assignments among department members at all ranks would require expending large sums of money which the institutions either cannot or will not provide. Meanwhile the effects of such grotesque imbalance on the morale of the department and on the quality of the instruction it offers are obvious.

The Rank of Instructor. Although some departments continue to employ whole platoons of instructors, several, including those at Indiana University and all the branches of the University of California, have abolished that rank and now appoint only at the rank of assistant professor and above. This practice is not yet widespread--81 percent of all departments still retain the rank of instructor--but there is reason to believe that it may soon become general and

that the lowest rank in today's academic hierarchy may eventually disappear. Inflation of salaries and the competition for qualified teachers have prompted the liberalization of standards and the elevation of titles described above; at the same time an increasing number of graduate students in English are receiving nonservice fellowships and other subsidies which enable them to achieve the doctorate before applying for their first full-time positions. (The Allen report, which recommends a four-year program for the Ph.D., should contribute to the acceleration of the process by which assistant professors are produced.) This trend towards eliminating the lowest rank coincides with (and may be causally related to) a trend towards eliminating, reducing, or enriching that portion of the undergraduate program which is so often delegated to junior staff members: freshman English. If the courses departments offer to freshmen are modified to make them more substantial and more demanding, it may be because conventional programs are deemed unsuited, not only to today's entering students, but also to today's beginning teachers, many of whom have skipped the rank of instructor and, they presume, the menial duties it has traditionally entailed.

The Ph.D.

The rank of instructor has commonly been reserved for those teachers who have not acquired the doctorate; indeed, at many institutions promotion to assistant professor is granted automatically when the doctorate is acquired. It might be supposed, therefore, that the percentage of Ph.D.'s among professors of English is high. In fact, it is not. The average percentage of department members above the rank of instructor who have the doctorate is 52. If we include instructors that percentage drops to 37.6.[2] Table 7 reveals some significant variations in this figure. The statistics in the table indicate that the incidence of Ph.D.'s among English teachers above the rank of instructor is highest in large, public institutions which offer graduate programs in English and that it is appreciably higher among departments in the Western and North Atlantic regions than among departments in the South. It would greatly simplify the evaluation of departments and of the education in English provided in the several parts of the nation if this single figure, the percentage of department members holding the Ph.D., were an infallible index of quality. Unfortunately it is not. There are some departments which, for various reasons, have few Ph.D.'s

---

[2] The Office of Education had a much higher figure in 1963. It estimated that 46 percent of all college teachers of English and journalism (at all ranks) had the doctorate. The difference between their figure and ours may be attributable to differences in the designs of the surveys. Or it may indicate that the percentage of English teachers who have the Ph.D. has declined during the past five years. According to the Office of Education, 51 percent of college teachers in all fields had the doctorate in 1963. See Ralph E. Dunham, Patricia S. Wright, and Marjorie O. Chandler, Teaching Faculty in Universities and Four-Year Colleges (Washington, D. C., 1966), p. 9.

TABLE 7

Incidence of Ph.D.'s in English Departments

Ph.D.'s in Relation to Size of School

Undergraduate enrollment	Percentage of department members above the rank of instructor who have the Ph.D.
Small	43.7
Medium	55.5
Large	65.0

Ph.D.'s in Relation to Graduate Programs

Departments which do not have graduate programs	42.4
Departments which do have graduate programs	67.4

Ph.D.'s in Relation to Type of School

Type	Percentage of department members above the rank of instructor who have the Ph.D.
Public	54.2
Private	52.4
Sectarian	48.8
Coed	50.9
Non-Coed	56.1

Ph.D.'s in Relation to Geographical Location

Region	Percentage of department members above the rank of instructor who have the Ph.D.
West and Southwest	54.4
North Atlantic	53.7
Great Lakes and Plains	52.6
South Central	49.5
Southeast	47.7

among their members but which provide good instruction in English; there are others which have a high percentage of Ph.D's but which offer nothing but stale and ineffective programs for undergraduates. Too often today the title "Doctor of Philosophy" designates little more than the completion of a course of graduate studies, and that achievement does not insure good teaching.[3] For this reason and others it is quite fallacious to rate departments and their programs solely according to the number and kinds of degrees their members have attained.

The Department's Authority and Jurisdiction

The department of English is not an independent body but a component of a larger organizational whole. As such its autonomy is limited, its jurisdiction defined by the structure of authority which prevails at the institution to which it belongs. In some matters it enjoys the right to govern itself; in others, it must abide by the decisions of faculty committees and the administration. The precise degree of autonomy which is granted the department often determines or influences the kind of program it can offer undergraduates. If it has no power to control the size of its classes, for example, the department may have to forego certain types of discussion courses and seminars. Or if it is denied the right to exclude students from its program for the major in English, it may have to adapt that program to accommodate students of inferior competence. Determination of the department's authority in these and many other matters is therefore essential to a definition of its role in undergraduate education.

In the classroom and in matters which pertain directly to teaching, the department's authority is all but absolute. Of all departments 77.5 percent enjoy complete autonomy in deciding how courses will be taught (whether by lectures or as discussions, for example); another 16.2 percent need only submit their plans to the administration for review. By tradition the classroom is inviolable (a fact which greatly impedes the evaluation of teaching competence and of whole programs, as we shall see), and very few administrators or faculty members from other departments would presume to derogate the department's right to decide just what ought to happen there from day to day. Beyond the classroom, however, the department's rights begin to diminish until finally, in matters which involve the expending of money and only that, the department has no authority at all. Many department chairmen are not told what their subordinates earn; only 0.7 percent of all departments are allowed to establish the salaries they may offer new members. Between the daily conduct of classes, which is the sole prerogative of the teacher, and the general distribution of funds, which is the principal office of the administration, great variation in the power to make decisions may occur. Table 8 is designed to show how many English departments have what degree of authority in selected matters which may

---

[3] "The degree of doctor, as we know only too well, guarantees at best a basic minimum. One thing it does not signify is that its possessor can teach at all . . ." Allen, p. 76.

TABLE 8

The English Department's Authority

	Department has complete autonomy	Action is initiated by departmental procedure and approved by administration	Action is initiated by department chairman alone and approved by administration	Action is initiated jointly by the department and the administration	Action is initiated by the administration and communicated to the department or chairman	Other procedures
1. Setting modes of instruction (lecture, discussion, T V, etc.)	77.5	16.2	2.6	1.5	0.4	1.8
2. Making course revisions	61.9	28.8	1.8	2.2	0	5.4
3. Adding or dropping a course from the curriculum	16.9	58.3	5.4	7.2	0.4	11.9
4. Adding or dropping a program (for example, an honors program)	13.3	48.5	4.4	13.7	7.8	12.2
5. Selecting new members of the staff	8.4	34.5	23.6	22.9	6.9	3.6
6. Appointing new members of the staff	2.5	29.2	21.5	22.3	19.3	5.1
7. Recruiting new members of the staff	16.5	28.6	22.3	20.5	8.4	3.7
8. Setting size of classes	20.2	28.4	17.1	16.0	14.2	4.4
9. Granting released time for writing, research, etc.	6.3	23.2	23.2	20.1	22.0	5.1
10. Establishing rank and salary for new members of staff	0.7	18.5	20.7	19.6	34.8	5.8
11. Setting teaching loads	10.1	19.6	18.1	15.9	29.7	5.8

influence their teaching of undergraduates. Opportunities for decision are arranged vertically on the left, in order of decreasing departmental power. Procedures for reaching decisions are arranged at the top, in a similar progression. The figures are percentages of departments which have each power. There are no surprises in this table. The figures it contains simply confirm what one might expect: that the department of English is allowed to regulate its own special affairs on most campuses but that its authority is hedged by economic considerations and by its obligation to contribute to the general educational program of the institution to which it belongs.

Finer analysis of these statistics reveals, however, that the amount of authority granted the department varies in direct proportion to the size of the institution. Thus, although only 8.4 percent of English departments in small schools (undergraduate enrollments of less than 1,500) have complete autonomy in selecting new staff members, 19.5 percent of departments in large schools (undergraduate enrollments of over 2,500) have this power. And although only 8.7 percent of departments in small schools are permitted to establish their own teaching loads, 11.8 percent of departments in large schools may do so. In every one of the matters listed on Table 7, departments in larger schools have more power than those in small schools. Conversely, some 20 percent of departments in small schools have no voice in decisions on tenure and promotion, whereas only about 2 percent of departments in large schools are thus excluded. No doubt the greater autonomy of large departments may be attributed to the sheer size and organizational complexity of large universities: power must be decentralized and delegated at such institutions, if only because no one person or agency has the time or competence to participate in all the decisions all the departments must make. Departments at larger schools thus win a bonus of authority almost by default. It is not clear, however, that their greater freedom to govern themselves inevitably results in better education for undergraduates.

Staffing

In 1967 the most urgent practical problem facing over half the departments in the nation was how to recruit enough good teachers: 51.3 percent reported that they were having difficulty in staffing their courses. Suddenly, in 1968, the job market changed completely. The sellers--those 825 or so graduate students who earn their Ph.D.'s in English each year and all others who sought new positions--found jobs extremely scarce, and the buyers--departments in institutions of all kinds and degrees of prestige--found themselves surfeited with applicants.[4] In 1969 and 1970 these conditions worsened, until the future began to look very grim indeed for the youngest members of this profession. This is the most dramatic, far-reaching, and profoundly

---

[4]Lawrence McNamee, Ninety-Nine Years of English Dissertations (Commerce, Texas, 1969), p. 15. McNamee's figures show a decline in the number of Ph.D.'s in English produced in recent years (from 895 in 1967 to 823 in 1968), while the number of doctorates awarded in all disciplines increased (from 20,621 in 1967 to 23,091 in 1968).

significant change to occur in the history of college English during the past twenty years, and it is worth noting that in all probability it is a change which was imposed from without, not generated by the profession itself.

Those who have studied the sudden reversal of the job market think they can discern a number of probable causes. Michael F. Shugrue, Assistant Secretary of the MLA, who directs many of its placement services, offers the following explanations:

1. The war in Viet Nam has drastically altered the nation's economy and has greatly reduced the amounts of federal and state funds allocated to education. Inflation, much of which may be attributed to the war, has increased expenses without increasing tax revenues proportionately. Education must compete with welfare, medicare, and other costly domestic programs for what money is left after military spending. The value of endowments and the amounts donated to private institutions have decreased as interest rates and taxes have risen. In short, colleges and universities of all kinds have less money to spend on instruction. Few are creating new positions; many are leaving vacated positions unfilled.[5]

2. Some public funds which formerly went to four-year institutions are now being diverted to junior and community colleges. The number of such colleges has almost tripled in the last decade, at great additional expense to state and local governments. If, as one expert predicts, "the community college or technical institute will, by 1980, have accepted virtually the entire responsibility for providing the first two years of college work,"[6] beginning teachers of English may find that a majority of the jobs available to them are at two-year institutions--and this despite the fact that they have been trained in graduate school to teach upper division courses and that most of them would greatly prefer to do so.

3. It may be that for many years the graduate schools have, all unwittingly, been producing more Ph.D.'s in English than were needed by the colleges and universities. While the sellers' market prevailed--or was thought to prevail--it seemed that the supply of college English teachers was inadequate to meet the demand; indeed, graduate schools were urged to accelerate their programs to remedy a supposed shortage. Allan M. Cartter warned in 1967, however, that "English appears likely to have a surplus [of college teachers] in the 1969-1975 period about sufficient to compensate for deficits in the previous five years,"[7]

---

[5]In the spring of 1970 William J. Baumol, a professor of economics at Princeton and chairman of the AAUP's Committee on the Economic Status of the Profession, reported the findings of a survey which indicated that "in 1965 five new professors were hired for every one who died or retired. In the 1970's, however, the ratio will be only three for one. . . . In the 1980's it will fall to two to one." (New York Times, April 28, 1970.)

[6]Joseph Cosand, Campus 1980 (New York, 1968), p. 139.

[7]"Future Faculty: Needs and Resources," in Improving College Teaching, edited by Calvin B. Lee (Washington, D. C., 1967), p. 127.

and it now appears that his prediction may have been correct. No one can be sure, because no one is certain, even after the panic of 1969 and 1970, just what the demand is or will be. Though English is not a very large community (its full-time population is, as we have said, only about 21,000), its economy has never been subjected to close and continuous examination; its needs at any specific time have never been determined. In the spring of 1970, the officers of the MLA assumed this task: They circulated a questionnaire designed to discover how many vacancies departments of English expected to have in 1970-1971. They hoped to compose an accurate description of the current job market by matching the number of positions available with informed estimates of the number of applicants. Meanwhile, the Association of Departments of English, an affiliate of the MLA, has been publishing its thrice-yearly lists of vacancies, in which departments have been describing their needs since 1964.

If the MLA survey and the ADE lists continue to reveal a shortage of vacancies, if the market remains dormant or closed, the effects will be widespread and deplorable. Hundreds of seniors who have acquired a serious interest in English and a desire to teach it will be discouraged or prevented from entering the profession as graduate schools reduce their programs in view of the dwindling demand for their products. Thus, a whole generation of teachers may be lost to the profession. Competition among teachers at the lower ranks will become intense as junior faculty members scramble for tenure. Tenure itself may come under attack as young teachers covet positions now preempted by their elders. Under these nearly barbaric circumstances some procedures for regulating the market and for apprising candidates of the few positions which become available would seem highly desirable. At the 1969 meeting of the MLA in Denver a group which called itself "the Job Seekers Caucus" urged that "a faculty placement service controlled by the Caucus through which all job information from all universities, all four-year colleges, and community colleges [would] flow without charge" be established. But John H. Fisher, whose concern for the welfare of the profession is as great as anyone's, responded to this proposal with scepticism.

> If every school really did list its vacancies; if all agreed to choose from a limited list of possibilities made available to them; if candidates were screened before being listed; if they agreed to go to any school which fulfilled their requirements, regardless of its location or prestige--if these conditions obtained, and then if Solomon would program the computer to match the right individual with the right school, we might begin to work our way out of our morass. But such a solution would require that both candidates and departments relinquish some autonomy. And how likely is that?[8]

Debates of this kind illustrate one of the few fortunate consequences of an otherwise calamitous event: the contraction of the market has forced the profession to reexamine its procedures for admitting new members, and this

---

[8]MLA Newsletter, February 1970, p. 2.

in turn has impelled many departments to ask themselves what they are looking for and why. The competition for jobs may also result in a wider dispersion of young teachers: no longer does the small college in Indiana need to depend solely on the midwestern universities to supply its candidates; now it can also choose among applicants from California, Massachusetts, and other states. The candidates themselves may be forced to abandon provincial prejudices, may find that teaching students of another kind in another part of the nation may not be as bad as they supposed.

But these accidental benefits will seem cold comfort to those young people who find themselves debarred from the profession of their choice by a war which is sapping the nation.

Competencies Sought in Candidates. Each year some departments have specified needs to fill: to inaugurate or to improve programs in linguistics, for example, they may need teachers who have acquired that special competency. Or they may lack experts in modern fiction, in the literature of the eighteenth century, or in the works of a single author. During the years 1966-1968, recruiting departments seeking specialists found the competencies listed in Table 8 in shortest supply. (Figures indicate percentages of departments which report that they encountered unusual difficulty in staffing particular courses.)

TABLE 9

Courses Difficult to Staff

Linguistics*	29.0
Medieval Literature	9.5
Freshman English	3.1
Seventeenth Century and Milton	2.7
Eighteenth Century Literature	2.7
Renaissance Literature	2.3
Nineteenth Century Literature	1.9
Modern Literature	1.9
Old English	1.1
Romantic Literature	1.1
No difficulty	54.2

Other specialties mentioned: American Literature, Creative Writing, Children's Literature, Secondary Teaching Methods, Speech, English Education, Modern Drama, Rhetoric, Dramatics,

Classics in Translation, Folklore, Fiction Writing, Journalism, Methods of Teaching Reading, Technical Writing, and Literary Criticism.

---

*The continuing demand for experts in linguistics is also attested by the fact that of the 313 positions listed in the ADE Bulletin of March 1968, 36 were for linguistics, by far the largest single number.

It is said that some opportunistic graduate students, aware of the shortage of candidates in certain fields, select their graduate courses and design their careers with a view to qualifying in areas in greatest demand; experienced recruiters know that, whatever the cause, the market for individual specialists changes from year to year and that it is difficult to predict just how scarce or abundant candidates in each field may be. The fluctuations of supply and demand in this unregulable market might have disastrous consequences for undergraduate education in English if all departments had fixed "tables of specialties" and if it were necessary for them to fill those tables in order to sustain their programs for undergraduates. But this, of course, is not the case. Only a very large department can hope to offer a perfectly comprehensive undergraduate curriculum--that is, one which includes specialized courses in every field--and the number of general, introductory, and service courses the department is expected to staff requires that it enlist the services of many multi-competent, versatile teachers. Although the convention of identifying a teacher by his specialty is still observed (and is encouraged by the conventions of graduate study), only 32.3 percent or less than a third of all departments now look only for specialists as they set about to recruit new members. Although 20.4 percent look for both specialists and teachers of general competence, the majority--53.4 percent--look for teachers of general ability, without regard to specialties. These figures vary predictably with (1) the incidence of Ph.D.'s in the department and (2) the extent of the department's commitment to graduate education (Table 10). This may be why 54.2 per-

TABLE 10

Competency Sought by Type of School

Departments with	Specialists	Generalists	Both
0-29% Ph.D.'s	19.1	69.0	15.8
30-59% Ph.D.'s	42.6	47.9	19.7
60-99% Ph.D.'s	40.0	42.0	18.0
Graduate Program	48.6	29.9	29.8
No Graduate Program	21.2	68.6	14.2

cent of all departments report that they have encountered no unusual difficulties in staffing particular courses: for most departments today the aim of recruiting is not to acquire a full stable of experts but to enlist a complement of able instructors who are willing to teach a variety of subjects to undergraduates.

It is appropriate to speculate on the full significance of this fact. Does it mean that the majority of departments now place relatively little emphasis on specialization, that although they may list their vacancies by specialties with the ADE, for example, and may discuss candidates' dissertations during interviews, their principal interest is in breadth of mind and teaching skill? And does this mean, in turn, that the courses these departments offer undergraduates may be less narrowly conceived and specialized than some suppose? Two supplementary facts must be considered before these inferences can fairly be drawn; unfortunately, these facts are contradictory in their implications, and thus they complicate rather than clarify our view of the effect of recruiting practices on the state of undergraduate English throughout the land.

The first is that a preference for teachers of general competence is much more common among departments in small colleges than in large universities--and it is at the latter that the great majority of American undergraduates receive their instruction in English. Although 67.1 percent of departments in small schools look for teachers of general competence, only 31 percent of departments in large schools do so. But it may well be that the 50.6 percent of large departments which seek specialists (the rest look for teachers of both types) have twice the number of students enrolled in English courses than at the small colleges which prefer teachers of general ability. The full figures relating type of competency sought to size of institution are shown in Table 11. If we assume that a

TABLE 11

Competency Sought by Size of School

	Specialists	Generalists	Both
Small	22.4	67.1	14.4
Medium	30.0	55.0	20.0
Large	50.6	31.0	31.1

preference for specialists may result in specialized courses, we may have to conclude that most American undergraduates are offered just such courses in English.

On the other hand, it frequently happens that an instructor who was appointed as an expert must be asked to accept teaching assignments well outside his field of specialty. Indeed, so great and various are the demands imposed on departments of English today that very few of their members can be permitted to limit their teaching to a single aspect of their discipline. The man who was hired because his dissertation demonstrated his ability to speak with authority about early seventeenth-century literature may be needed to teach the popular course in the modern novel--or even to teach freshman English. Here, as in other matters soon to be discussed, whatever impulse the profession may have towards specialism and the nice definition of provinces is thwarted by practical exigencies and the generalized function assigned to the department of English by the academic community. Some may deplore the degree of amateurism which results from this enforced diversification; others may welcome it as an antidote to the insularity and pendantry which have frequently been attributed to English departments in recent years.

Recruiting Senior Staff Members

Each year it occurs to some departments that they might improve their programs and enhance their prestige by persuading prominent professors and associate professors at other institutions to join their staffs. Often the candidates for such elevated appointments are recognized experts in specific fields, and frequently the departments have special inducements to offer: endowed chairs, reduced teaching loads, unique library holdings, and the like. Statistical evidence suggests, however, that it is difficult to lure senior teachers from positions to which they have become accustomed and that relatively little "hiring at the top" actually occurs among departments of English. Table 12 shows how many departments in institutions of different sizes and kinds appointed professors and associate professors during the period of 1964-1967. During a period of three years, then, less than one-fifth of all departments succeeded in recruiting one or more professors, and less than two-fifths enlisted one or more associate professors. Reports from the other end seem consistent with these figures: 86.3 percent of all departments declare that during these years they lost no more than one member they wanted to keep. The rate of attrition is slightly higher at small and medium-sized schools than at large institutions (which may mean that the general movement of teachers whose services are in demand is away from the colleges and towards the universities), but if all these reports can be credited it appears that there is relatively little mobility among college teachers of English at the

TABLE 12

Hiring at the Top

PROFESSORS:

	Number of Professors Hired 1964-1967							
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Small	91.0	8.3	0.7					
Medium	75.0	22.8	2.8					
Large	59.8	24.4	4.8	7.3	3.7			
Public	78.2	4.8	6.0	7.2	3.2			
Private	86.4	12.5	1.1					
Sectarian	89.2	10.8						
ALL *	79.0	8.8	2.3	2.3	1.1			

(continued)

TABLE 12

Continued

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS:

	Number of Associate Professors Hired 1964-1967							
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Small	74.8	23.0	2.2					
Medium	62.9	17.1	5.7	8.6	2.9	2.9		
Large	34.6	28.2	21.8	9.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.6
Public	40.0	27.4	15.8	12.6	1.1		1.1	2.2
Private	64.7	26.0	4.7	2.4		2.4		
Sectarian	80.6	15.3	4.2					
ALL *	59.9	23.4	8.7	5.6	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8

* These figures are based, as are similar figures in other tables, on analysis of the total data and have only an approximate relationship to the figures which precede them.

upper ranks and that the "vast game of musical chairs" which some envision has not yet commenced. Indeed, many chairmen have testified that all their efforts to hire at the top have served only to enhance the candidates' positions at home.

The Lot of the Woman

Not long ago the director of graduate studies at an eastern university received a letter from a colleague at a midwestern college who had been asked to support a young woman's application for admission to graduate school. "I would gladly recommend Miss _____," he began, "except that I hesitate to encourage any woman to enter our profession today." He meant, of course, that most women who elect to become college teachers of English encounter such prejudice against their sex that they find their careers frustrating and unrewarding. This view of the profession's conduct towards women has been widely held and sometimes expressed. Many believe that, although no one questions their fitness to serve as teachers of English in the secondary schools, there is a general conviction among chairmen and others in power that women are unfit for college teaching--or that men are better suited for this task than they. If this belief is justified, if those in charge of selecting and promoting college teachers of English do in fact discriminate against women, either deliberately or unwittingly, the profession must surely admit that it vio-

lates its own humane principles and denies itself resources it can ill afford to neglect.[9] Investigation of professed policies and actual practices of departments across the land reveals, however, that the lot of the woman in this profession, though still unsatisfactory in some respects, is no longer simply that of a persecuted minority.

A few chairmen confess that they are reluctant--or even unwilling--to offer appointment to young female teachers, and they give the following reasons for their disinclination to do so:

1. Women are transient. They marry and become pregnant or leave when their husbands move on to other positions. Thus they seem bad risks to chairmen whose aim is to assemble and retain stable staffs of teachers.

2. The social life of certain isolated academic communities is uncongenial to single women. As one chairman put it, "There isn't enough for them to do here. The rest of us are preoccupied with our families, and sooner or later they feel excluded and lonely. Then they leave."

3. Males are better able than females to engage college classes and to elicit their best efforts. Students respect male teachers more highly, prefer them to females.

4. Women are passive, more docile than men, and cannot be expected to participate actively in departmental affairs.

5. Some single or divorced women are susceptible to emotional disturbances which may affect their teaching and their relations with their colleagues.

No doubt some members of the profession advance these reasons simply to mask their prejudice. Others offer them as honest explanations of their hesitancy to invite young teachers to enter a contract which may prove unsatisfactory to both parties.

The great majority of departments and their chairmen, however, have no such reservations about hiring women. Of all English departments in the United States, 85.8 percent flatly assert that they have no tradition or policy against appointing women, and many of these are actively seeking competent female teachers. A few significant variations are revealed when this percentage is analyzed with regard to size and type of school. From the data in Table 13 it becomes evident that departments in large, public, coeducational institutions are least likely to discriminate against women, most likely to welcome them as fully privileged members.[10]

---

[9]In 1969 the MLA established a Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession to study this matter.

[10]The difference of almost 15 percent between coeducational and non-coeducational institutions can probably be attributed to the fact that the latter include several all-male colleges, which do not traditionally hire women. Some of the best of these, however, now indicate a desire to do so. Examples are Brown, Hamilton, and Haverford.

TABLE 13

Departmental Bias against Women

	Percent Which Claim No Bias against Women
Small	83.6
Medium	85.0
Large	89.8
Coed	88.9
Non-Coed	74.1
Public	90.6
Private	89.2
Sectarian	74.7

About 90 percent of those departments which profess to have no bias against women do in fact have female teachers among the full-time members of their staffs. Nor is it fair to charge the remaining 10 percent with hypocrisy; several of them have tried in vain to recruit suitable female candidates. Although approximately 22 percent of all those who receive the Ph.D. in English each year are women,[11] every year a number of departments receive no letters of application from women. Others give special attention to such letters when they do arrive or make unusual efforts to find likely female candidates when they have positions to fill. Among those departments of English which report that they are especially anxious to add qualified women to their staffs are those at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of California at Santa Cruz, Duke University, the University of Nebraska, the University of North Carolina, Oberlin College, Occidental College, Stanford University, the University of Texas, and Wesleyan University. Their example suggests that, if the job market ever returns to normal, the competition for the services of well-trained, fully committed young women of superior ability will be so great that none should find it difficult to find a satisfactory position.

Women have full-time positions in 84.9 percent of all college English departments in the country; that is, only about 15 percent of all departments have no full-time female teachers. As might be expected, the incidence of women among full-time staff members at all ranks is higher at large, public, coeducational institutions of other sizes and kinds. In Table 14 the figures refer to percentages of departments in each category which employ women on a full-time basis.[12] Critics of this profession's treatment of women must

---

[11] Wayne Tolliver and Patricia Wright, Earned Degrees Conferred, 1964-1965 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, 1967), p. 125.

[12] Figures which include part-time female teachers would be much higher, of course. Many departments rely on faculty wives and other part-time female employees to staff their freshman programs and their introductory courses.

TABLE 14

Departments Which Employ Women

	Have Women	Have No Women
Small	78.6	21.4
Medium	82.5	17.5
Large	96.5	3.5
Coed	89.1	10.9
Non-Coed	70.0	30.0
Public	96.2	3.8
Private	77.8	22.2
Sectarian	77.9	22.1
ALL	84.9	15.1

concede, then, that it does not simply exclude them and that a surprisingly large number of departments in institutions of all kinds have women on their rolls.

Just how these teachers fare in professional competition, however, is more difficult to determine. Do they receive their fair share of the recognition and rewards the profession has to disburse? More specifically, are they promoted through the ranks as readily as their male colleagues? An answer to this question may be found in the following statistics on the distribution of women among the several ranks:

1. The number of English departments which have full-time female staff members at each rank. Among those departments which have women on their staffs, 72.4 percent have female instructors, 77.2 percent have female assistant professors, 46.6 percent have female associate professors, and 43.7 percent have female professors. These figures may be somewhat misleading, however, because they include all departments which have any women at each rank. More significant are the statistics which indicate:

2. The average percentage of full-time department members at each rank who are women. What proportion of the department's instructors are females? How many of its professors are males? Here it may be best to proceed rank by rank.

a. Instructor. The percentage of women among those who hold the rank of instructor varies from about 30 to 40, depending on the size and kind of institution. The average percentage is 37.7. That is, more than a third of all those who teach college English at the lowest rank are women. Variations each way are disclosed by Table 15. It will be noted that the average per-

TABLE 15

Female Instructors

	Average Percent of Instructors Who Are Women
Small	34.9
Medium	30.4
Large	40.7
Coed	37.9
Non-Coed	29.9
Public	37.8
Private	37.3
Sectarian	38.0
ALL	37.7

centage of women at the lowest rank is highest among the very schools which are most likely to hire women: the large, coeducational institutions.

b. Assistant Professor. At this rank, which usually signifies some prospect of continued employment, the average percentage of women is 36.1, not much smaller than that for the rank below. Quite large variations begin to appear, however, when this figure is refined (Table 16). It seems probable that

TABLE 16

Female Assistant Professors

	Average Percent of Assistant Professors Who Are Women
Small	39.5
Medium	27.3
Large	29.7
Coed	31.4
Non-Coed	46.3
Public	33.6
Private	29.8
Sectarian	47.0
ALL	36.1

the relatively high percentages of women among department members at this rank and at ranks above it at small, sectarian, non-coeducational institutions can

be attributed to the fact that many Catholic colleges of this description are staffed in large part by nuns.

c. Associate Professor. An average of 24.7 percent of college English teachers at this rank are women. Once again the percentage for small schools is somewhat higher (25.3 percent), as is that for sectarian (34.4 percent) and non-coeducational (30.3 percent) schools. The full figures are given in Table 17.

TABLE 17

Female Associate Professors

	Average Percent of Associate Professors Who Are Women
Small	25.3
Medium	22.4
Large	19.3
Coed	21.0
Non-Coed	30.3
Public	22.5
Private	19.2
Sectarian	34.4
ALL	24.7

4. Professor. As we move to the top rank, the percentage of women diminished (but not at small, sectarian, non-coeducational schools). The average percentage of female professors among all departments is 23.5. Among departments at institutions of different sizes and types, the percentages vary as shown in Table 18. (Some figures which indicate fairly large geographical variations are added for what significance they may have.)

TABLE 18

Female Professors

	Average Percent of Professors Who Are Women
Small	26.4
Medium	20.4
Large	6.0
Coed	18.2
Non-Coed	35.5

(continued)

TABLE 18
(continued)

	Average Percent of Professors Who are Women
Public	16.6
Private	18.5
Sectarian	37.1
North Atlantic	22.8
Great Lakes	21.7
Southeast	28.6
West and Southwest	13.4
South Central	16.5
ALL	23.5

This set of statistics reveals that, except at a few colleges which, one suspects, employ mostly women (and many of them under vows), the proportion of females among regular teachers of college English decreases with elevation in rank. But even more significant, perhaps, are the figures which indicate:

3. The percentage of all female teachers who have attained each rank. How many of those women who now teach English in college hold each rank? An average of 35.8 percent of those in all departments are instructors, almost the same number--35.9 percent--are assistant professors, 15.7 percent are associate professors, and 16.0 percent are professors. When these figures are compared with those which describe the distribution of male teachers by rank some fairly large discrepancies are revealed (Table 19).

TABLE 19
Distribution by Rank and Sex*

	Men	Women	All Teachers
Professor	22.2	14.2	20.4
Associate Professor	19.6	15.3	19.2
Assistant Professor	32.3	35.0	32.9
Instructor	26.4	35.5	27.9

*"Other" ranks are omitted (see p. 8).

It is clear that the proportion of women who have risen to the upper ranks (or, one may see, who have been admitted to those ranks) is considerably smaller than the proportion of men and that the great majority of women (over 70 percent) are to be found at the lower levels of the hierarchy. This is especially true at large, public, coeducational institutions, which employ most women (Table 20).

TABLE 20

Distribution of Women by School Size

	Average Distribution of Women	Large Schools	Public Schools
Professor	14.2	11.1	10.5
Associate Professor	15.3	9.6	11.3
Assistant Professor	35.0	32.8	36.3
Instructor	35.5	46.5	43.3

It may well be, however, that what imbalance there is can be attributed to the fact, so often noticed by those who are averse to hiring women, that more women than men drop out of the profession or fail to pursue their professional careers with full energy and dedication. For men, marriage may prove a spur to ambition; for women, it often entails commitments which cannot be reconciled with the strenuous schedule of a full-time English teacher in today's colleges or universities.[13]

"We'd like to hire more bright young women," one department chairman said in an interview, "They add variety to our departmental discussions, and many of them make excellent teachers. But we're looking for competence, intelligence, and some originality of mind; sex is really secondary." These remarks summarize the attitudes of many departments across the land, and they seem consistent with the implications of the statistics cited above. They suggest that nowadays the woman may expect that she will encounter little discrimination against her sex in this profession--may even be granted some favored treatment as a candidate--and that she will be judged in most departments by the same standards the profession applies to men. All this, one presumes, is just as she would have it.

Employing a Husband and His Wife. It often happens that young men and women meet and marry while both are engaged in graduate studies or are serving as beginning teachers. Frequently the wife's ability and credentials are equal--or superior--to the husband's. Both may have professional ambitions, neither may wish to sacrifice all he or she has acquired through years of training, and to departments which have need of their services

---

[13]When this section of our report was shown to Professor Florence Howe of Goucher College, who is chairman of the MLA Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession, she replied, "It seems to me you choose a particularly unfortunate way of stating the case. When you contrast 'full energy and dedication' with a single word 'commitments,' you omit the full energy and dedication which many women double after marriage in order to work both at that and at a career. Marriage may be socially a 'spur' to men and a 'drain' on women, but need this be so? And if it is so--because of the way it has been--need we, as professionals working to ameliorate the inequity, need we cater to it?"

they may seem valuable candidates. For many years, however, it has been generally supposed that, because of institutional regulations designed to prevent "nepotism" and because of certain ill-defined apprehensions among established teachers, few departments in this country could or would offer employment to such couples. The evidence suggests that this supposition is incorrect and that a majority of departments in institutions of all kinds are now willing to appoint both a husband and his wife to their staffs.

Three objections to this practice are most often expressed:

1. That it is difficult, once they are employed, to separate the husband's case from his wife's (or vice versa), and therefore it is difficult to judge them individually. If, as sometimes happens, the man proves less able than the woman, to discharge or fail to promote him entails such embarrassment that he may be retained and even advanced, unfairly shielded by his wife;

2. That a husband and wife may vote en bloc in departmental affairs (or may seem to do so) and that their power, which sometimes appears to be greater than the sum of its parts, may be resented by other members of the department;[14]

3. That if one member of the husband and wife team achieves a position of influence in the department, the other may receive (or seem to receive) favored treatment.[15]

Evidently these arguments against an institution's availing itself of the services of both a husband and his wife do not seem conclusive to most college departments of English, 65.4 percent of them now have no objections to hiring married couples. Willingness to do so is most common, however, among those small departments which annually appoint only a few members. Table 21 relates policies towards employing a husband and wife to sizes, types, and geographical locations of institutions throughout the land. From these statistics it becomes clear that very few institutions other than large, public universities have anti-nepotism rules; that, for some reason, sectarian schools are unusually willing to appoint a husband and his wife; and that this practice is most common in the Southeast, least common in the West. It seems ironic that large departments, which, because of their very size, are least likely to be captured or disrupted by married couples, are most reluctant to hire them.

---

[14]A compromise adopted by a few institutions stipulates that only one spouse may be granted tenure; presumably this regulation is intended to insure that no husband and wife will move upwards through the ranks together and thus acquire excessive power in the department.

[15]Some institutions have recently liberalized their policies in this matter to prohibit the appointment of a husband and wife only when one will be supervised or evaluated by the other.

TABLE 21

Policies on Hiring Married Couples

	Will not hire couples	Will hire couples	Will hire couples only conditionally*
Small	20.9	43.8	29.9
Medium	29.0	34.2	47.3
Large	54.4	21.0	22.2
Public	57.0	24.0	17.0
Private	25.0	35.2	35.2
Sectarian	8.5	53.5	28.2
North Atlantic	34.8	33.3	24.6
Great Lakes	22.2	35.8	37.0
Southeast	32.7	44.9	20.0
West	47.2	30.5	22.2
South Central	45.5	31.8	18.2
ALL	32.4	35.4	30.0

*Rarely hire couples, seldom need them, or will grant tenure to only one member.

Terms of Appointment

No longer does the young teacher who is appointed assistant professor find himself in competition with his peers for a limited number of openings at the top. Now only 7.1 percent of all departments have fixed tables of organization which may restrict advancement (by specifying, for example, that the department will consist of ten assistant professors, six associate professors, and five professors), and 95.2 percent of all departments are "hiring to keep." That is, almost all departments of English now assume that everyone they appoint above the rank of instructor will have full opportunity to achieve tenure and promotion to the highest rank and that their advancement will depend solely on their own individual performances. "Failure to meet Departmental standards results in dismissal," the officers of the department of English at Indiana University said recently."But this is comparatively rare. . . . New faculty members are appointed with the expectation that they will perform ably (the selective process is thorough), and they usually do." Very few departments (Dartmouth is one) recruit more teachers than they intend to promote; most expect continued expansion; thus they are able to promise new members a clear track ahead.

Those who enter the profession at the rank of assistant professor are usually appointed for an initial period of from one to three years. Almost all one-year contracts are renewed after a term's service and are continued on a year-to-year basis until a three-year contract is awarded or until the first decision on promotion and tenure is reached. Departments which offer three-year appointments to new members often renew them

after two and one-half years, without awarding promotion or tenure; decision on these matters is usually made after four and one-half years. There are many variations on these patterns. At the University of California, Berkeley, new members remain assistant professors for eight years, but they are advised in their fourth year whether or not it is probable that they will be retained and promoted. At the University of California, San Diego, the usual term as assistant professor is six years, but each case must be reviewed by a faculty committee every two years so that the candidate will be regularly and fully apprised of his status. The most common period of service as assistant professor is five years, and it is now the practice of many departments to offer those who will not be retained a terminal year in which to seek employment elsewhere. On the other hand, early promotions are frequently awarded to especially promising young teachers whose services their departments are anxious to keep.

Tenure

The practice of assuring college teachers security of employment has now become almost universal, and achieving tenure has become, for better or for worse, a primary goal of many who enter the profession. Of all four-year colleges and universities, 91.3 percent grant tenure. The figure varies considerably among schools of different types--it is 97.1 percent for public institutions, 91.5 percent for private, and only 82.9 percent for sectarian schools--but those institutions which still make no provision for tenure are now in a small minority. The widespread acceptance of the concept of tenure can be attributed in large measure, of course, to the militant efforts of the American Association of University Professors, whose policy on tenure provides a standard for the profession. That policy is stated, in part, as follows:

> After the expiration of a probationary period, teachers or investigators should have permanent or continuous tenure. . . . Beginning with appointment to the rank of full-time instructor or a higher rank, the probationary period should not exceed seven years, including within this period full-time service in all institutions of higher education . . .

A number of institutions have simply adopted this policy as their own. Others have more or less liberal policies, which may be identified with reference to the standard set by the AAUP. Table 22 analyzes the policies on tenure in effect at institutions of various kinds and sizes throughout the land. Figures indicate percentages of schools which have each type of policy (or no policy at all). "More liberal" means that decision on tenure is reached before the seventh year; "tenure with promotion" means that the candidate is automatically granted tenure when he is promoted to associate professor. Those who approve of tenure as an institution (and good arguments against it can still be advanced) will be heartened to learn that over three-quarters of all institutions which offer four-year programs in English now subscribe to the AAUP's policy or have more liberal policies of their own. It is particularly significant that about 88 percent of large public institutions, which employ about 55 percent of all college teachers of English, meet the AAUP's standards, and well over half of them exceed these standards.

TABLE 22

Policies on Tenure

	No tenure	AAUP policy	More liberal than AAUP	Less liberal than AAUP	No policy but tenure	Tenure with promotion	Other
Small	14.9	29.3	36.1	5.4	6.1	0	5.4
Medium	2.5	39.5	50.0	5.0	0	5.0	0
Large	1.1	34.1	54.5	4.5	0	2.2	2.2
Public	2.9	26.6	61.9	3.8	0	3.8	0.9
Private	8.5	37.2	36.2	5.3	5.3	0	7.4
Sectarian	17.1	32.9	28.9	6.6	6.6	5.2	2.6
ALL	8.7	32.0	44.0	5.1	3.6	2.9	3.6

The decision to award or to deny tenure is, in effect, a decision to retain or to release the candidate at over 40 percent of all institutions: if faculty members do not achieve tenure within the various periods these institutions stipulate, they are dismissed. Other schools have no such policy of "up or out," or they seldom confront such decisions, as Table 23 shows.

TABLE 23

"Up or Out" Policies

	Have this policy	Do not have this policy	Have no policy at all	Retain on year-to-year basis	Withdraw voluntarily*	Situation rarely arises	Other
Small	32.5	50.0	7.1	2.4	0.8	5.5	1.5
Medium	45.9	29.7	10.8	8.1	2.7	2.7	2.7
Large	59.6	19.6	4.8	7.1	2.4	1.2	4.8

(continued)

TABLE 23
(Continued)

	Have this policy	Do not have this policy	Have no policy at all	Retain on year-to-year basis	Withdraw voluntarily*	Situation rarely arises	Other
Public	56.1	26.5	5.1	6.1	1.0	1.0	5.1
Private	43.5	35.3	8.2	5.9	1.2	5.9	0
Sectarian	25.0	56.3	7.8	1.6	3.1	4.7	3.1
ALL	43.7	36.4	6.9	4.9	1.6	3.6	2.8

*Faculty members who are not granted tenure usually leave voluntarily.

It is notable that where policies on tenure are most liberal--at large, public institutions, that is--the decision on tenure is most often crucial to the career of the candidate.

Procedures for Reaching Decisions on Tenure and Promotion

At approximately 12 percent of all institutions the power to decide who will be granted tenure and who will be promoted resides with the administration alone; the departments have no vote in the matter. (As noted earlier, many more small colleges than large are ruled from the top: about 20 percent of departments in the small schools lack authority in matters of tenure and promotion but only about 2 percent of departments in large schools are denied such authority.) All other departments, however, must establish procedures for deciding what recommendations they will make to those administrative officers who have final responsibility for awarding tenure and promotion. Most of these departments--91 percent, to be exact--follow the same procedure for tenure as for promotion; many decide cases of both types together. The most common procedures in effect today may be listed according to the degrees of democratization they imply:

1. Decisions are made by the chairman alone.

2. Decisions are made by the chairman in consultation (often informal) with other members of the department.

3. Decisions are made by the chairman and an advisory committee appointed by him.

4. Decisions are made by all those superior in rank to the candidate.

5. Decisions are made by a committee elected by the tenured members of the department or, in a few cases, by the department as a whole.

Table 24 shows the percentages of departments which subscribe to each of these procedures.

TABLE 24

Departmental Procedures for Tenure and Promotion

	Tenure	Promotion
Department does not make decision	11.6	13.4
Chairman alone	42.8	44.6
Chairman seeks advice of department members	3.6	4.5
Chairman and an appointed committee	21.0	22.7
Chairman and an elected committee	6.5	7.1
Chairman and those superior in rank to candidate	9.8	10.8
No formal procedure	9.4	3.0
Other	5.8	6.7

In well over 40 percent of all departments, then, decisions in cases of tenure and promotion are made by the chairman without formally consulting his colleagues. It is not surprising that this most autocratic, least democratic procedure is more common in small schools than in large: the percentages of departments in small colleges which entrust the power of decision to the chairman are 44.7 and 47.8 (the former for tenure, the latter for promotion); in large universities they are 37.9 and 34.1; conversely, the percentages of small departments in which such decisions are made by several members are 18.6 and 19.2, of large departments 59.8 and 64.7. Here again we observe that, probably for practical reasons, authority is more widely distributed in large institutions than in small.

Having arrived at its decisions, the department must communicate them to those who represent the institution as a whole, in final deliberations on tenure and promotion. (The approval of the trustees or regents is usually granted automatically.) Some institutions follow elaborate procedures at this point. The Department of English at Wesleyan University, for example, must first submit its recommendations to the president's Advisory Committee, which, if it agrees, passes them on the president himself; his decisions are reviewed by the Academic Council (consisting of all faculty members with the rank of professor), which must approve the president's recommendations by a

majority vote. At Indiana University the chairman notifies the dean of the college of the department's decisions; that officer appoints a secret committee, whose judgments are then submitted to the dean of the faculty; he appoints another secret committee, which can initiate promotions as well as deny them; its decisions are then transmitted to the president for approval. Most institutions, however, reach their final decisions by one of the following less tortuous routes:

1. The department makes recommendation to the president, who decides.

2. The department makes recommendation to the dean, who makes recommendation to the president.

3. The department makes recommendation to a general faculty committee, which advises the president.

4. The department makes recommendation to a general faculty committee, which advises the dean, who advises the president.

Table 25 reveals that the second procedure listed above is the most common in schools of all sizes. Once again, the simpler procedures are more common among the smaller institutions (at a surprising number of which the chairman of the English department is not told how the administration decided who will be granted tenure and who will be promoted.)

The administration always accedes to the department's recommendations on tenure and promotion at 18.3 percent of all schools; at another 63 percent it usually does. Less than 10 percent of all departments report that their administrations regularly reject their recommendations. One must conclude, then, that on most campuses the professional fates of young teachers of English are usually decided in the councils of the senior members of the department.

Criteria for Tenure and Promotion. How are those councils conducted, and what standards are applied as candidates for tenure and promotion are judged? No business on the department's agenda is more delicate or more demanding of wisdom; none is of greater moment, both to the candidates and to the department as a whole. As they define the criteria by which they will decide the cases that come before them, as they elect to value one professional activity or personal attribute above another, those who are charged with making the department's recommendations on matters of tenure and promotion are, in effect, expressing a concept of the English teacher and his function. They are saying, either explicitly or by implication, "This is what the department wants and will reward," and in saying that they come as close as most departments ever do to defining their understanding of what they are about.

When asked to list their criteria for tenure and promotion in order of importance, most departments of English in this country begin with some reference to teaching skills. Overall, 66.5 percent declare that what they value most highly is the ability to teach well, and no other competence or professional accomplishment is deemed more important by an appreciable number

TABLE 25

Institutional Procedures for Tenure and Promotion

	Department to President	Department to Dean to President	Department to Faculty Committee to President	Department to Faculty Committee to Dean to President	Not Known	Other*	No Policy
Small	7.1	28.6	16.4	12.9	8.0	21.4	5.7
Medium	2.8	36.1	22.2	22.2	2.8	13.9	0
Large	4.9	32.9	7.3	29.3	2.4	23.2	0
ALL	5.8	31.0	14.3	19.4	5.4	20.9	3.1

*Examples of other procedures reported: Faculty Committee to Administration; Chairman alone to Administration; Chairman alone to Dean to Administration.

of departments. Table 26 gives the percentages of departments which rank each of the attributes listed as their first and second desiderata when judging cases of tenure and promotion. Percentages at the right indicate how often each attribute appears somewhere on departments' lists of criteria.

TABLE 26

Criteria for Awarding Tenure and Promotion

	Ranked first	Ranked second	Occurs somewhere among criteria
Teaching competence	66.5	19.4	96.9
Scholarship (including publication)	10.4	25.0	76.6
Length of service	6.2	7.1	26.6
Promise of growth	2.3	2.8	14.2
Service to institution	1.9	15.1	66.9
Professional service	0.4	2.8	23.4
Service to students	0	1.7	11.3
Personality	0	1.7	20.7
Other	12.3	18.7	57.1

When the first two columns above are amalgamated,[16] they yield a composite list of those attainments departments of English profess to seek as they evaluate candidates for promotion and tenure. Most important, they say, is teaching ability; scholarly accomplishment (and, in most cases, published evidence of such accomplishment) is next; service to the institution (administrative duties or work on college-wide committees, for example) is ranked third; length of service, service to the profession (usually through national organizations), and promise of professional growth are also credited. Many departments consider all but the first three qualifications to be of minor importance. Outstanding professional service, for example, may enhance the candidate's reputation, but he will not be promoted for that achievement alone. Some departments require evidence of distinction in at least two of the first three categories listed above. Thus a candidate may be excused for contributing relatively little to college affairs if he is known to be a skillful teacher and a productive scholar. But, of course, it is in deciding precisely how much weight to assign to scholarly activity--and, more specifically, to publication--that departments differ most widely and most significantly.

[16] Tabulations of third and fourth rankings disclose no important variations.

A very few, like the Department of English at the University of California, Berkeley, place primary emphasis on scholarship and will not award tenure or promotion unless the candidate has produced a sufficient body of published material which is deemed to be of good quality. "Superb teaching may help a man's case," said one officer of that department, "but we assume that we all teach well and therefore we don't promote people just because they are good teachers." At the opposite extreme are those institutions--most of them small colleges--at which publication is actually discouraged because it is thought to distract from teaching. The remaining departments which have well-defined policies on this matter--and most do not--take positions somewhere between these poles. In general, small departments and departments which do not offer graduate programs are more likely than medium-sized or large departments to value teaching ability over scholarly accomplishment. In other words, the degree to which the department rewards scholarly productivity (or demands evidence of such productivity) is directly proportional, in most instances, to its size and to the size of its curriculum. It is also proportional to the incidence of Ph.D.'s among members of the department; the higher the percentage of Ph.D.'s, the greater the emphasis on scholarship and publication (Table 27). But modifications and qualifications of strict policies on publication are common as chairmen and their advisors try to reconcile competing requirements for advancement in ways suitable to the circumstances they confront. Here are some statements they have made in interviews:

> I suppose we are more impressed by publications than by reports of good teaching. An article or a book is a tangible object, which sits on a shelf; teaching just occurs, and its quality is hard to measure.
>
> We believe that a man either publishes or perishes inwardly. "Great teachers" wear out fast.
>
> Before we grant tenure we insist that the candidate submit evidence that he can write and write well. But the evidence may be a poem or an unpublished article. We just want to make sure he can use words effectively.
>
> Many scholarly articles and books published in our field today are almost worthless. They contribute very little to the improvement of education, which is what we are after.
>
> We are about to dismiss one young man who has published a great deal but who has done nothing for us. He is just using the department.
>
> We want our people to publish if they can because it may do them--and the department--some good.

Some chairmen are convinced that their department's national reputation depends almost entirely on the number of articles and books produced by its members, that the department will soon become "invisible" and will find it difficult to enlist good teachers (and good graduate students, if they are wanted) if its name does not appear on the final pages of a

sufficient number of articles or on the title pages of enough books. Others deplore the fact that the need to publish compels some faculty members to slight or to avoid entirely such arduous teaching assignments as freshman English. Said one chairman, "Some of the young men tell me, 'I can't read all those papers, because I won't have time for my own work.' I ask them, 'What is your work if it isn't teaching students to write?'" In his department as in others, however, eligibility for tenure and promotion is often measured, not according to how many lower division classes the candidate has been willing to assume, but according to whether or not his published works have enhanced the department's prestige. It is an ironic fact, now become almost tediously familiar to members of the profession, that although an insistence on publication can damage a department's program for undergraduates, it may become difficult to sustain and impossible to improve that program unless the department is sufficiently well known to attract its share of good candidates for appointment each year.

English teachers regularly require their students to "publish"--that is, to express their thoughts and discoveries in formal written utterances--and they do so in part because they believe that the act of conception is not completed until the thing conceived is issued or made public. One enlightened view of scholarly publication now endorsed by many departments follows from this belief. It holds that teachers must continue to read and to make their own discoveries in order to teach well, and it presumes that most teachers will want to share what they have found with others. It concedes that some faculty members may "publish" best by communicating to students in the classroom, but it also recognizes that many will find their fit audience only among their peers, who are best addressed through journals for scholars. It therefore applauds (though it does not demand) efforts to fully realize fine perceptions by giving them precise expression and then submitting them to the judgments of others who are expert. If it is true, as those who take this view assume, that faculty members teach best what they have struggled to express in writing, scholarly publication of the kind these departments encourage should complement and enrich the teaching of undergraduates.

Evaluating Teaching

Only a few teachers of English publish significant works during their professional careers, and many publish no works at all; the daily business and sole occupation of most of them is teaching. It is on their teaching alone, therefore, that most members of this profession must be judged, and it is for evidences of good or at least satisfactory teaching that most departments look as they conduct their periodic reviews of staff members.[17]

---

[17]Bruce Harkness, dean of Arts and Sciences at Kent State University and a member of the survey's Advisory Committee, offers the following comments on this matter:

> First, that colleges and universities do in fact promote on the basis of teaching. Second, that the constant and universal worrying about "objective standards of evaluation" of teaching is misplaced: in actual fact our method of evaluation of publication is far from objective

TABLE 27

Criteria for Promotion by Size and Composition of Departments

RANKED FIRST	Teaching competence	Scholarship	Service to institution	Professional service	Length of service	Promise of growth	Personality	Service to students	Other
Small	68.9	4.4	0.7	0	8.1	3.7	0	0	14.1
Medium	76.9	10.3	2.5	0	0	2.5	0	0	7.7
Large	58.1	19.7	3.5	1.2	5.8	0	0	0	11.6
Graduate program	64.2	19.8	2.8	0.9	2.8	0	0	0	9.4
No graduate program	67.6	4.0	1.3	0	8.6	4.0	0	0	14.6
0-29% Ph.D's	71.9	5.2	1.0	0	5.2	1.0	0	0	15.6
30-59% Ph.D's	70.9	12.8	1.2	1.2	2.4	4.7	0	0	7.0
60-100% Ph.D's	54.1	15.0	4.1	0	12.2	1.4	0	0	13.5

(continued)

TABLE 27
(Continued)

Criteria for Promotion by Size and Composition of Departments

RANKED SECOND	Teaching competence	Scholarship	Service to institution	Professional service	Length of service	Promise of growth	Personality	Service to students	Other
Small	16.5	21.3	14.9	1.6	8.7	1.6	3.9	7.1	25.2
Medium	10.3	35.9	17.9	0	5.1	5.1	10.3	5.1	10.3
Large	28.2	25.9	14.1	5.9	5.9	3.5	3.5	1.2	12.9
Graduate program	24.5	26.4	17.9	4.7	2.6	2.6	4.0	0.9	8.6
No graduate program	16.0	24.3	13.2	1.4	9.7	2.1	3.5	7.0	22.9
0-29% Ph.D's	17.9	24.7	15.0	5.4	9.7	2.2	4.4	6.5	19.4
30-59% Ph.D's	20.5	30.1	15.7	1.2	2.4	2.4	6.0	3.6	18.1
60-100% Ph.D's	27.0	18.9	12.2	1.4	9.5	4.1	4.1	4.1	18.9

Very few other professions subject their members to such frequent and such crucial evaluation: the stockbroker, for example, is not appointed for a term of service which leads to a critical review of his competence and to possible dismissal. (Ironically, it is the military which most closely resembles college teaching in its practice of ranking and regularly reassessing its members.) For all its show of system, however, the teaching pro-

---

and, if departments would accept the same degree of perfection in both areas, they would have no qualms about promotion on the basis of teaching.

I believe that statistical studies support the view that most holders of the doctorate in English (or mathematics for that matter) publish one or two articles in their entire careers--virtually all publication is done by some 10 to 20 percent of the profession. Since the other 80 percent do get promoted on some reasonable timetable, it follows that promotion is based on some other aspect of a man's work. Public and college "service" are admittedly little recognized, advising and other student related activity are nowhere on the operational scale of values, and length of service is not a prime reason for promotion. Therefore it logically follows by the elimination of other categories of recognition (and there being no publication to speak of) that promotion is in fact based on teaching.

In regards publication itself, departments are unable to make good judgments. Every esteemed book has its detractors. We all deny that pages are counted, and the attitude is both just and true. Yet we are unable to assess the scholarly quality of work in exotic areas such as linguistics or medieval studies, and have great difficulty in evaluating it in the more populous fields. I judge it very common for the Victorianist on the departmental promotions board to experience real problems in understanding the virtues of his colleague's latest couple of articles on Middleton and Dekker.

In arriving at judgments on published scholarship, the dilemma is usually resolved by asking half a dozen people what they think of a man's work. In rare cases is there a consensus. The view of a few trusted advisors is accepted; and, if favorable, promotion follows. Evaluation of published scholarship is thus by no means objective: how many of us cannot remember the days when "New Critics" were passed by at promotion time?

Departments have traditionally muddled through with this lack of objectivity when they wished to promote a man because of his research. Why do we insist on a higher degree of objective evaluation in regards his teaching? If departments wished to promote on teaching, they could with a clear conscience do so, on the basis of information anyone could turn up in half an hour. If we do not promote on teaching, it is because we do not wish to, not because of the problems of evaluation.

fession's judgments of its members' competence and effectiveness at their primary task are no more precise and well founded than those of other professions. Indeed, they may be less so, because it is peculiarly difficult to define the criteria and to certify the evidence on which its judgments must be based.

When confronted with the central question, "What constitutes good teaching?" some departments (or their spokesmen) are simply unable or unwilling to answer. No doubt they believe they have experienced good teaching and can recognize it when they see it, but they decline to reduce so complex and various a phenomenon to formula or definition. Others are willing to undertake at least a summary description of the effective teacher and his art, and it is possible to identify certain abilities and attributes to which large numbers of them refer as they try their hands at this difficult task. Table 28 contains a list of those skills and characteristics which are most frequently mentioned when English teachers are asked to define good teaching. (Figures indicate percentages of all replies which allude to each ability.)

TABLE 28

Characteristics of the Good Teacher

Provides stimulation, motivation	86.3
Has knowledge, mastery	76.9
Has enthusiasm, interest	40.2
Establishes rapport with students	39.3
Has fresh ideas, critical insights	34.6
Meets classes, professional duties, etc.	19.2
Has high, fair standards	18.8
Is popular with students	3.9

Other attributes mentioned: considers varying abilities of students; relates contents of courses to other aspects of students' lives; has sense of humor.

It would be wrong to attribute great significance to these figures: they represent a distillation of a number of necessarily brief and superficial responses to the question, "What are your criteria for good teaching?"[18]

---

[18]To avoid dictating replies to the question, no list of skills or attributes was provided. It was then necessary to code replies, and this process inevitably resulted in some oversimplification and distortion. Note also that respondents were not asked to rank their criteria.

It could be argued that when they are faced with such a whopping query most respondents are likely simply to produce a string of those virtues to which the profession gives lip-service. Even such a catalogue may be revealing, however, if only because it probably indicates which qualities and abilities departments believe they ought to respect and reward. A composite picture derived from a representative sample of responses to this question describes the model teacher as one who stimulates his students and inspires strong motivation in them by conveying, with enthusiasm and consideration of their interests and needs, an understanding of a subject he knows well. He is one who has original perceptions, an abiding interest in his subject, and the ability to communicate both of these to his students so that they will want to join him in the rigorous but imaginative pursuit of his discipline. And, finally, he is one who meets his professional responsibilities (conducting classes, attending to departmental chores, and the like) punctually and efficiently. Variations, amplifications, and clarifications of this paragon (which inevitably reads a bit like the Boy Scout Creed) may be offered, and none will comprehend all teachers at all institutions. Moreover, use of such terms as "stimulate," "understanding," and "imaginative" may raise more problems of definition than they solve. But if a generalized description of the good teacher is wanted so that the great blanks it contains can be filled in as each case is judged, some such loose definition may serve. It then devolves to individual departments to match this idealization or some model of their own with what evidence of the teacher's actual performance they can obtain.

Precisely at this point, however, a major problem arises, one which plagues most departments and to which few have found satisfactory solutions. It is the problem of just how to obtain reliable and accurate evidence of what actually occurs in each instructor's classroom. This profession is unique in that the very scene of its primary activity is considered inviolable and the product of its principal labor cannot readily be measured. The college teacher is seldom or never observed at his work except by those on whom he is working, and the effects of his efforts cannot be collected to be assessed. Those who are charged with judging his competence as a teacher must therefore gather their evidence by indirect, imperfect means, and often the evidence they acquire is of dubious validity. The most common means to which they resort are listed below. (Figures indicate what percentage of all departments use each procedure; many, of course, use more than one.)

Informal personal contacts: 93.4%

Reviews of assignments, examinations, and other teaching materials: 50.9%

Student evaluations solicited by the department or by the administration: 39.9%

Classroom visitation: 36.2%

Informal contacts with students: 28.0%

Student evaluations published independently by students: 18.8%

Other means or types of evidence reported include options of colleagues (including colleagues in other departments) solicited by the department or the administration; regular evaluation sessions; informal, unsolicited student evaluations; informal discussions within the department; comparison of how well the teacher's students perform on common examinations; review of grades given by teacher; comparison of class enrollments; the teacher's performance as a lecturer in sectioned courses; his performance in oral examinations; his performance in departmental meetings; advisors' reports on students' preferences; interviews with students changing majors.

With so many sources and kinds of information available to them, it might seem that those who must judge teaching ability should have little difficulty in arriving at a just estimate of each instructor's performance. All of the most common practices afford abundant occasions for error, however, and none insures that degree of certainty which department members would like to achieve as they make decisions which affect the welfare of the department and its members so profoundly. The virtues and limitations of the several procedures may be summarized as follows:

Informal Personal Contacts. Impressions of the candidate's traits and abilities gathered over several years of professional association with him are bound to condition the judgments of those who must decide whether or not he deserves tenure or promotion. Some departments rely entirely on such informal impressions, using no other means to determine teaching competence. They believe that from his contributions to departmental shop-talk, from his remarks about his students, from his comments on literature and other matters which pertain to his discipline, even from his behavior on social occasions one may come to know the cast of a man's mind and deduce (or guess) with reasonable accuracy how he must conduct his classes. They assume, many of them, that there is nothing deeply mysterious about the teaching process and that if a man demonstrates wit, imagination, learning, and compassion in his conversations with his colleagues he will probably retain those attributes when he addresses his students, will probably teach well. Finally they suppose that any gross discrepancy between his performance inside the classroom and out will eventually become known. Thus, these departments put their faith in their ability to judge their members as human beings, and to predict, more or less intuitively, which human beings will make good teachers and which will not.

The chief objections to this procedure--or lack of procedure--for estimating teaching skill are

1. That it is entirely too haphazard and imprecise. It is argued that those who are responsible for judging the candidate's competence as a teacher may misinterpret his personal style, make mistaken inferences, or be unduly influenced by some insignificant mannerism or act. The judges'

subjective impressions of the candidate's daily behavior as a man must be translated into some notion of his conduct in the classroom, and this, it is said, may be a highly fallible practice.

2. That it is impossible for senior members of large departments to know well all those they must judge, and therefore they must depend in many cases on hearsay and rumor.

3. That this procedure encourages politicking and the courting of favor and penalizes candidates who are incapable of making themselves personally attractive to those who will decide their fates. The lot of the young teacher who will be judged on his personality alone, without regard to formal evidence of his performance in the classroom, is especially precarious in those departments--and there are several--which are riven with feuds. As a senior member of one such department said, "At this place a man's teaching career can be ruined if he walks to the library with the wrong colleague."

4. That it may become impossible to deny tenure and promotion, whether or not they are deserved, simply because no objective evidence of incompetence is available. "We might as well give them tenure when we hire them," said an officer of the English department at one of the California State Colleges, "because even after five years we don't have any way to prove that they are not entitled to it."

Reviews of Teaching Materials. Most teachers of English have occasion to distribute printed exercises, assignments, examinations, and reading lists to their students, and often these documents provide valuable clues to how they conceive and conduct their courses. A lazy, hackneyed assignment ("Write a paper on women in Shakespeare's plays") may be indicative of unimaginative or cynical teaching. A fresh and ingenious examination question, well designed to test both knowledge and critical ability, is presumptive evidence of teaching skill. Some departments now require candidates for tenure and promotion to submit examples of their teaching materials when their cases are to be judged; these are evaluated just as scholarly publications are appraised. If it is remembered that there is more to teaching than preparing impressive handouts, there would seem to be no danger in this procedure and much to be gained from it.

Student Evaluations. As American college students have become more assertive in recent years and as faculty members, administrators, and governing boards have become more sensitive to their opinions and demands, one instrument for measuring teaching skill which had long been neglected or disparaged, the student evaluation or rating of teachers and their courses, has suddenly begun to enjoy a great vogue. To invite or to entertain students' comments on their teachers is not an innovation, of course: a number of institutions--among them the University of Washington, Bennington College, and Georgia Institute of Technology--have had such procedures for years; at others--Harvard University and the University of Michigan, for example--the students themselves have been publishing their ratings since the twenties. Now, however, it appears that the need to establish a medium which will permit students to express their views of their instructors is felt on almost every campus in the land. Although one recent

survey indicates that "use of student ratings as a technique [of evaluation] has declined substantially during the past five years" among chairmen and deans,[19] 50.9 percent of all departments of English now consult formal reports of student opinion at some point during their discussion of candidates for tenure and promotion. Not all credit them highly, but there is a general feeling that they should not be ignored entirely.

Three formal means are used to collect students' opinions of their teachers:

1. Individual teachers may request students to evaluate them and their courses. The results may be communicated to others (for example, to the chairman of the department), but they seldom are, either because they are favorable to the teacher or because he is reluctant to brag. No doubt teachers may gain self-understanding from such private surveys, but they are under little external pressure to act on criticisms and suggestions thus obtained; they may simply file them away.

2. The department or the administration may solicit student evaluations by distributing questionnaires to all those enrolled in the teacher's courses, to recent graduates, or to both. At some institutions (for example, the University of Washington), the administration simply makes its surveying facilities available to instructors, who may or may not forward the findings to their superiors. At others, students' opinions are collected by the department or the administration, shown to the instructor if he wishes, and reviewed when decisions on tenure and promotion are made. To insure that all constituencies of the institution are represented in the surveying process, students and faculty members at Occidental College have collaborated to compose an excellent questionnaire, which is distributed in all classes. Responses are collected by the department chairman but not examined until final grades have been recorded. The chairman discusses the student evaluations with the instructors, then keeps a record of the ratings. This is consulted by the dean and the Advisory Council (an elected body) when they make what are in effect final decisions on tenure and promotion. Laura Kent reports yet another procedure, which has been developed at Montana State College:

> There, student ratings are kept on a voluntary basis and are seen by the instructor only, although names of instructors requesting ratings are listed in the dean's office and are available to the Curricula and Instruction Committee. Moreover, "any instructor who does not voluntarily submit himself to appraisal may be asked to do so by the students of his class"; if at least 20 percent of the class petitions the student section of the Curricula and Instruction Committee, and if the claim is determined to be valid, the chairman of the student section notifies "both the instructor

---

[19] John W. Gustad, "Evaluation of Teaching Performance: Issues and Possibilities," in Improving College Teaching, edited by C.B.T. Lee (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1967), p. 271.

and his department head of the class request." Although these provisions do not say that the faculty member must submit himself to evaluation, he is obviously under considerable pressure to do so.[20]

It is clear that under these rules the threat of student evaluation may become a kind of coercive device.

3. The students themselves may have had some such aim when they first began to publish their own ratings of their teachers. These "guides to teachers and courses" are now available on many campuses, including the University of California at Berkeley and Santa Barbara, the University of Wisconsin, and Bryn Mawr, to name but a few. They range in quantity from snide, even vicious "exposés" to highly responsible, well-prepared critiques. The best of them offer helpful course descriptions not available in the official catalogue, as well as carefully compiled ratings (which are sometimes correlated with the grades the respondents received). So great is the popularity of such evaluations that the National Student Association now publishes a "student's confidential guide" to preparing confidential guides![21]

It takes a bit of courage for faculty members to express opposition to student evaluations, if only because those who do so may be suspected of being poor losers in a popularity poll. Nevertheless, many teachers, good and bad, remain honestly skeptical about the value of student ratings. A few--probably a dwindling minority today--openly challenge the students' right to criticize their superiors in age and wisdom. Others argue that to subject the instructor to such criticism is to demean him and to threaten his integrity: the teacher, they say, is compromised when he must sell himself or cater to student opinion. But the most common objection to student evaluation concerns the competence of the evaluators and the means by which their opinions are gathered and interpreted. Although recent investigations have shown that students are not as easily duped by classroom histrionics and lenient grading as faculty members suppose,[22] their competence to judge their instructor's scholarship or "command of his subject" is obviously limited by their inexperience. No one knows better

---

[20]"Student Evaluation of Teaching," in Improving College Teaching, p. 323. Quotations are from "Montana State College Faculty Rating System Approved by the Instructional Faculty, March 2, 1950" (Mimeographed).

[21]Philip Werdell, Course and Teacher Evaluation: A Student's Confidential Guide (Washington, D. C.: United States National Student Association, 1966). The term "confidential guide" evidently originated with The Harvard Crimson, a student newspaper which has published its own evaluations under that title since 1924.

[22]Kent, "Student Evaluation of Teaching," pp. 330 ff.

than they whether or not the instructor has succeeded in "inspiring strong motivation in them" (to recall our description of the ideal teacher) or in communicating his perceptions and his interest in his subject, but as learners they are not well qualified to assess their teacher's learning, and if their ratings are to be pure expressions of the best evidence they have to offer--that which reveals something about what has happened at their end of the educational process--they should not be asked to pretend to an expertise they do not have. Those items on the standard questionnaire which request students to rate their instructor's erudition or "mastery of his subject" invite invalid responses; when these responses are combined with replies to questions on the instructor's appearance, his sense of humor, and his fairness to students (as they are at the University of Connecticut and elsewhere), the conglomerate rating which results may be seriously misleading. Furthermore, too few institutions acknowledge by their procedures for assessing student evaluations that, no matter how they distribute and retrieve their questionnaires (or no matter how the survey is conducted by the students themselves), they are taking a sample of student opinion, not collecting the opinions of all students. Administrators and departmental officers often point to tabulations of the students' replies and say, "This is what the students think." What they should say, of course, is, "This is what some students think when confronted with these questions, and their opinions may or may not be representative." Unless great care is taken to elicit a high percentage of responses from a properly selected sample of the student body, the findings may be completely invalid or perfectly ambiguous. If all members of an instructor's class are asked to evaluate his teaching, for example, and only 50 percent return their questionnaires, a sample has been taken, but there is no way to determine whether or not that sample is representative. Why did one-half respond and not the other? Are the opinions collected those of the dedicated and the cooperative or those of the enthusiastic and the disgruntled? Often the ratings are expressed numerically, which may lend a spurious appearance of quantifiable fact to what is actually a crude computation of random opinion on a highly complex subject. If the "fact" is then entered on the teacher's record and given great credence and weight when that record is judged, the instructor may be done a disservice, his professional career blighted by false or tainted evidence.

Interviews with college teachers of English at all ranks in all parts of the country suggest that most of them are more than willing to entertain their students' criticisms, complaints, and suggestions. Very few have any desire simply to talk to themselves in the classroom; many are anxious to enlist their students' collaboration in improving their courses. What disturbs them most is not the prospect of being evaluated but the slipshod methods by which students' opinions are now gathered, reported, and construed.

Classroom Visitation. Despite the tradition which holds that to invade a man's class for the purpose of observing his teaching is to violate his professional rights, senior members regularly visit the classes of junior members in a surprising number--over a third--of the departments of English in American colleges and universities, and most of those who subscribe to this practice are convinced that it is the only fair and reliable way to evaluate teaching ability. At Marquette University, for example, the chairman and members of an advisory committee visit each new member's classes at least twice a year during the first two years of his appointment. They believe that both the instructors and the department benefit from this procedure. They say that

they can easily identify the obviously incompetent and the obviously brilliant teachers among their junior staff and are better prepared to dismiss the former and reward the latter. At Wellesley College, classes taught by instructors and assistant professors are observed twice a year by two or three senior faculty members, who sometimes visit as a team. Apparently this procedure causes little or no dissension in this small but relatively congenial department, although the value of visitation is doubted by many of its members. At Dartmouth College every new member of the department is assigned to a senior member, who serves as his "mentor"; they visit each other's classes, and the counselor reports to the department on the junior member's teaching. And at Western Illinois University the senior observer has been replaced by a television camera: videotapes of "live classes" are made, and these are reviewed and discussed by the instructor and the chairman. This practice is said to be "most constructive."

The principal argument against visitation is that the presence of the observer, whether human or electronic, inevitably affects the observed and therefore what the official examiner witnesses is not a representative specimen of the instructor's teaching but a special performance staged for a special occasion. If the class goes badly, it may be necessary to attribute this ill success to the instructor's nervousness under scrutiny; if it goes well, the visitor may suspect that the instructor has prepared it with unusual care--has even, perhaps, rehearsed it--and that his students are rallying to his support with unwonted loyalty and enthusiasm. In any case, the observer can never say, "This is how this man teaches." Indeed, the evidence he collects may be as partial and fallible as that collected by indirect means. It is also argued that visitation may do harm to young teachers and that it demands an unwarranted amount of the visitor's time.[23] Certainly it would require great amounts of senior members' time to visit the classes of all the young teachers in large departments. Because they cannot afford the expense it entails, because they are reluctant to offend or to inhibit their junior colleagues, and because they are skeptical of the value of visitation, most departments forego this, the most obvious means of investigating teaching competence.

* * * * * * * * *

In 1965 an ad hoc committee of the Yale faculty which was appointed to review that university's procedures for awarding tenure and promotion came to the melancholy conclusion that "the problem of evaluating teaching is one for which no solution seems altogether satisfactory."[24] Most depart-

---

[23]George Mills Harper, "'The Waste Sad Time': Some Remarks on Class Visitation," College English, 27 (November 1965), 119.

[24]Report to the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the Ad Hoc Committee on Policies and Procedures on Tenure Appointments, quoted in The Importance of Teaching: Report of the Committee on Undergraduate Teaching, edited by C. Easton Rothwell (New Haven: The Hazen Foundation, 1968), pp. 57 ff.

ments of English would concur. Many of them have tried some or all of the solutions rehearsed above and have found them unsatisfactory for some or all of the reasons given. Each procedure interposes a filter of one kind or another between the judges and the complex phenomenon they are asked to judge. Nor is it likely that they would judge much more wisely if they could view the phenomenon directly: the learning (and hence the teaching) process is as yet so imperfectly understood that absolute standards for measuring teaching effectiveness seem unattainable at present. Finally, most departments are forced to admit, to themselves and to higher authorities, that they simply cannot certify the teaching competence of any of their members, can only estimate or divine how well each performs in the classroom. They may console themselves with the fact that, as one department chairman put it, "it's pretty hard to hide really bad teaching," and may assume that, if there are no serious complaints, most members of the department must be teaching satisfactorily. But precisely how much each is accomplishing and how well their total program is succeeding they can never be quite sure, and that uncertainty may debilitate or vitiate much of their enterprise. There is a certain specific sense in which this profession simply does not know what it is doing.

The Chairman of the Department

In 78.1 percent of all English departments the chief officer is called a "Chairman"; in almost all the remaining he is called a "Head." (One relatively new department, that at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has adopted the fine Canadian term "Convener.") In some instances the two titles designate different offices with different degrees of authority. Thus, New York University, which has two campuses, has two departments of English, each of which has a chairman; presiding over both is a head. The term "Head" formerly implied that the power to make most final decisions within the department was vested in the chief officer; the term "Chairman" implied that the chief officer's powers were limited and subject to democratic review. This distinction has now been blurred, however, and the choice of titles no longer provides an infallible clue to the distribution of power within the department. Table 29 shows how decisions on tenure and promotion are reached in departments which use each of the two titles. The differences revealed by these statistics are probably not large enough to be of great significance. Although the head has slightly more authority than the chairman in these critical matters, his authority is certainly not absolute. Eventually the two titles may become synonomous and interchangeable.[25]

How the Chairman Is Selected. The chairman is elected by his fellow members of the English department at 7.5 percent of all institutions; elsewhere he is selected by the president of the institution or his administrative officers, with or without the advice and consent of the department. Just how many schools of which sizes follow each procedure is shown by Table 30. In this matter as in others, departments in large schools enjoy a somewhat higher degree of autonomy than those in medium-size or small schools, but relatively few departments of all sizes are formally consulted by the administration when a new chairman is

---

[25] Throughout this report the more common "Chairman" is used to designate the chief officer of the department.

TABLE 29

Authority of the Chairman and the Head

	Chairman alone	Chairman and advisory committee	Chairman and candidate's superiors in rank	Elected Committee	Chairman seeks advice of department	Department does not decide	Other	No policy
TENURE								
Chairman	42.0	23.4	9.8	7.0	2.3	18.1	6.1	7.0
Head	45.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	8.3	6.7	5.0	15.0
PROMOTION								
Chairman	43.3	24.0	11.5	7.2	3.0	15.4	6.3	2.4
Head	52.4	18.6	8.5	5.1	10.2	6.8	8.5	5.1

TABLE 30

Procedures for Selecting Chairman

	President alone	President and dean	Dean and department	Dean and advisory committee	President and department	Dean alone	Administration	Elected by department	Seniority	Other*
Small	26.0	24.6	1.5	0.8	5.4	7.8	13.9	5.4	3.0	11.5
Medium	21.1	21.1	7.9	7.9	2.6	5.2	21.1	5.2	0	7.9
Large	18.3	16.9	21.1	4.2	9.9	5.6	7.0	14.1	0	2[illegible].4
All	21.7	20.6	7.5	2.8	5.9	6.3	12.3	7.5	1.6	1[illegible].2

*Examples of the other procedures reported: department to dean to president; elected departmental committee; director of academic affairs; senior staff to division head to provost.

to be appointed. Among those which are is the department of English at the University of Chicago, where a lengthy procedure insures that all interests will be represented. There the dean inaugurates the process of selection by convening the whole department under the temporary chairmanship of a senior professor. A committee of three is elected to consult with every member of the department and to recommend a candidate. The whole department then votes on this recommendation, which is forwarded to the dean whether or not it is approved by the department. If there is disagreement within the department, the dean appoints an ad hoc committee to resolve the dispute. He then forwards his recommendation to the provost, who makes recommendation to the president. Most administrators are unwilling simply to impose a chairman on the department; most elicit the opinions, nominations, and recommendations of the faculty, if only through informal conferences. At almost all schools, however, the administration reserves the final right to decide who will serve as the officer accountable to it for the conduct of the department.

The Chairman's Terms of Office. The chairman is appointed to serve for an indefinite period at about 70 percent of all institutions. When a term is set, the most popular is three years. Table 32 reveals that large departments are more likely than small ones to limit the chairman's term of office.

TABLE 31

Duration of Chairman's Term of Office

Number of full-time department members	Indefinite	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
0-9	75.4	6.9	6.2	10.8	0	0
10-19	78.7	8.2	6.6	6.6	0	0
20-29	50.0	8.3	2.7	27.7	8.3	0
30-39	52.9	0	5.9	35.3	0	5.9
40-99	50.0	4.5	4.5	27.2	4.5	9.1
ALL	69.2	6.8	5.6	15.0	1.5	1.5

At 94.2 percent of those institutions which limit the chairman's term, he may be reappointed. Thus, the chairman of the department of English at Brown University is appointed by the president to serve four years, but if all goes well he may be asked to remain in office for at least one more term. "Nowadays it is difficult to find a good man who is willing to take the job," said one officer of the department, "and we are inclined to keep anyone who handles it satisfactorily."

The chairmanship is rotated--that is, regularly reassigned among the senior members--in 14.6 percent of all departments. This procedure is said to distribute the burden of the office more equitably and to prevent the autocratic acquisition of power. In large departments, however, the duties of the chairman have become so specialized, so complex, and so demanding, that only a few members can or will undertake them; thus rotation often is not feasible. As the chairman comes more and more to resemble a business executive, serving in this capacity may become a profession in itself.

The distinction and responsibilities which accrue to the chairman are acknowledged by a special stipend at 29.6 percent of all institutions; the man who becomes chairman is automatically awarded a bonus of from 10 to 20 percent of his salary. Some administrative officers argue that this is a bad practice. "They get used to higher living and won't give up the job," the provost at an eastern university said. The answer to this objection is best illustrated by the department of English at the University of Pennsylvania, where an extra stipend is attached both to the chairmanship and to the assistant chairmanship. It is well understood that these positions are temporary and that those who occupy them will be awarded the added wage only while they serve. Other members of the department may earn extra money by such extra-professional activities as writing textbooks and reviewing; the time-consuming office of chairman should also be rewarded, it is said, but that reward should be relinquished with the office.

The only practical reward most chairmen receive, however, is a reduction in their teaching schedules; 58.2 percent of all departments afford their chairmen some relief from the normal teaching load. Paradoxically, the lighter the regular teaching load, the greater the reduction for the chairman is likely to be. The summary in Table 32 includes only those departments which reduce the chairman's load.

TABLE 32

The Chairman's Teaching Load

Normal Teaching Load	3	6	9	12	15	6 & 9*	9 & 12	12 & 15	Own Discretion
9 Hours	41.1	33.3	0	0	0	7.5	0	0	18.5
12 Hours	10.4	31.2	45.5	0	0	5.2	2.6	0	5.2
15 Hours	3.2	6.4	38.7	38.7	0	0	6.2	3.2	3.2

*Six hours one term, nine the next.

Among chairmen of all departments (including those which reduce the chairman's load and those which do not) the most common load is nine hours. The following figures indicate the percentage of all chairmen who have each load:

3	6	6 & 9	9	9 & 12	12	12 & 15	15	Own Discretion
13.3	20.7	6.3	28.1	5.6	20.0	1.5	3.0	6.3

The percentages for those chairmen who have lighter than normal loads (that is, whose loads are reduced) are as follows:

3	6	6 & 9	9	9 & 12	12	12 & 15	15	Own Discretion
14.8	25.9	4.4	34.8	3.0	8.9	0.7	0	7.4

Very few chairmen do no teaching at all; even those who must direct the multifarious activities of large departments usually prefer to maintain contact with students and their professional skills by teaching at least one class each academic year.

The Assistant Chairman. The duties of the chairman often include such onerous tasks as recruiting, management of the department's fiscal affairs, assignment of courses, housekeeping, review of candidates for tenure and promotion, counseling students, and participation in the many meetings at which the department's educational policies are formulated. Chairmen of several large departments have found that it is impossible for one man to perform all these duties satisfactorily, that some or many of them must be delegated to subordinates. Of all departments, 15 percent now appoint (or elect) an assistant (or associate or vice) chairman, who relieves the chief officer of a number of his administrative chores.[26] Table 33 indicates how widespread this practice has become, especially among departments which have thirty or more members. (Figures are percentages of departments in each size range.)

TABLE 33
Duties Assigned to Assistant Chairman

Size of Department	Appoint assistant chairman	Administrative duties	Proxy for chairman	Director of undergraduate studies	Director of freshman English	Other
0-4	4.1				2.0	2.0
5-9	3.5	1.2	2.4			2.4
10-19	6.6	3.3			3.3	

(continued)

[26]For a report on the use of administrative assistants (who are not faculty members but "department managers"), see Kenneth Roose, "How to Be a Department Chairman and Like It," ADE Bulletin, 22 (September 1969), 35.

TABLE 33
(Continued)

Size of department	Appoint assistant chairman	Administrative duties	Proxy for chairman	Director of undergraduate studies	Director of freshman English	Other
20-29	22.9	11.4	5.7		8.6	5.7
30 and up	57.1	38.1	11.9	4.8	11.9	1.9

Over 50 percent of all departments of English in institutions which have undergraduate enrollments of over 8,000 students appoint an assistant chairman. In about 80 percent of all cases he is appointed for an indefinite period, but some departments limit his term of office to two, three or four years. Only 16.6 percent of those institutions which make provision for an assistant chairman attach an extra stipend to the position, but in most his teaching load is reduced, frequently to six hours. Whether or not the assistant chairman succeeds the chairman when the latter retires from office depends on local contingencies and traditions: at some universities it is understood that the assistant chairman is an apprentice chairman; at others the office is rotated and no such presumption obtains.

The Qualities Expected in the Chairman. If it is difficult to find distinguished teachers who are willing to accept the chairmanship--and several departments which have recently conducted lengthy searches report that it is--the reason may be not only that the position entails a great deal of tedious and sometimes depressing labor but also that it demands rival, almost antithetical abilities and temperaments. On the one hand the chairman is expected to be an outstanding scholar and teacher, whose example will elicit the respect of his colleagues. On the other he is expected to be an efficient administrator, who combines managerial skill with political acumen. Perhaps because they despair of finding all these virtues in one man and because they value orderly administration above all else, many departments no longer consider it essential that the chairman have a national reputation as a scholar and teacher. Table 34 reveals the views departments in institutions of different sizes and kinds have expressed on this matter. (Figures are percentages of all departments in each category. Some departments expressed more than one view even though they may seem mutually exclusive.) These statistics admit of contradictory interpretations: one may combine columns one and two and say that 87.4 percent of all departments continue to look for outstanding scholarship and teaching ability in their chairmen, or one may combine columns two and three and say that 95.2 percent of all departments no longer insist that their chairmen have such attributes. Most significant, however, is the fact that many departments no longer expect their chief officer to be the Complete Man, and many--including well over a third of departments in large universities--now conceive the office of chairman primarily as an administrative position.

The Chairman's Power and Function. The majority view of the chairman's power is consistent with this more modest view of the qualities he must bring

TABLE 34

Qualities Desired in Chairman

	Essential that chairman be outstanding scholar-teacher	Desirable that chairman be outstanding scholar-teacher	Administrative ability most important
Small	26.0	63.7	29.5
Medium	30.0	60.0	37.5
Large	23.0	59.0	38.6
Public	25.7	60.4	37.6
Private	29.7	56.0	31.9
Sectarian	20.8	70.1	30.0
No graduate program	27.4	64.6	32.3
Graduate program	22.6	57.0	35.3
ALL	25.7	61.7	33.5

to the office. Apparently the days are over when the chairman was a kind of benevolent despot who formed the department in his own image and ruled rather than chaired. Only 6.2 percent of all departments reported that their chairmen are independent leaders, who control their departments from the top. It is reported by 31.4 percent that their chairmen are merely presiding officers or spokesmen for their departments, but the great majority--65 percent--say that their chairmen are both. That is, the chairman's function in almost two-thirds of all departments is to lead the department in the democratic conduct of its affairs. Often a distinction is made between the chairman's role within the department and his role outside. Among his colleagues he may be little more than a "convener" or referee, who must abide by the decisions of the majority. When he confronts the faculty senate or the administration on the department's behalf, however, he must appear to be the department as he fights to protect its interests and to present its point of view. In some departments, most of them small, a further distinction is made between decisions pertaining to personnel, which are made by the chairman alone, and decisions pertaining to academic programs and educational policy, which are reached by democratic procedures. In any case, the status of

the chairman in most of today's departments of English is best described by a paradox: he is "the first among equals," one who governs by arranging for others to govern.

How the Department Conducts Its Business

The department is governed by the whole of its membership at 79.8 percent of all institutions. When major changes in their programs are contemplated or other important matters are to be discussed, the chairmen of these fully democratized departments may prepare agenda and present proposals, but decisions are reached by open discussion and majority vote at plenary meetings. Table 35 confirms that this practice is especially common among small departments.

TABLE 35

How Important Decisions Are Made

	By department as a whole	By chairman alone	By chairman and committees	By committees	Department ratifies	Chairman ratifies	Other
Small	90.7	5.3	4.6	2.0	1.3	0.7	3.3
Medium	87.2	7.7	28.2	5.1	2.6	0	0
Large	57.5	5.7	52.9	1.1	3.4	3.4	4.6
ALL	79.8	5.8	23.1	2.2	2.2	1.4	3.2

It is still possible for the chairmen of many small departments to reach consensus by polling their colleagues informally; in large departments--say, the 28 percent which have over twenty members--it becomes necessary to follow more cumbersome, parliamentary procedures. Regular meetings must be scheduled, and much of the department's business must be delegated to committees. Just how often departments meet is revealed in Table 36. (Figures are percentages of departments in each category.)

TABLE 36

Frequency of Departmental Meetings

Full-time members of department	No regular meetings	Meet each week	Meet every other week	Meet each month	Meet twice each term	Meet once each term	Meet once each year	Frequency not stated
0-4	46.0	2.0	2.0	32.0	12.0	2.0	0	4.0
5-9	25.9	11.8	11.8	25.9	10.6	4.7	1.2	8.3
10-19	30.4	1.8	8.9	33.9	3.6	7.1	0	14.3

(continued)

TABLE 36
(Continued)

Full-time members of department	No regular meetings	Meet each week	Meet every other week	Meet each month	Meet twice each term	Meet once each term	Meet once each year	Frequency not stated
20-30	20.6	2.9	0	52.9	17.7	2.9	2.9	0
Over 30	28.2	2.6	2.6	33.3	17.9	7.7	2.6	5.2
ALL	30.3	5.3	6.4	33.3	11.4	4.9	1.1	6.4

If more medium-sized than large departments hold general meetings at regular intervals, the reason may be that the complex business of the latter cannot easily be discussed and determined by the department sitting as a whole. A majority of departments with twenty to thirty members find it practical and efficacious to meet once a month, but much of the work of very large departments must be done by administrators or committees, and only momentous questions of policy can be submitted for the consideration of all the members. It is said that life in such departments sometimes resembles life in a large, urban community and that individual members--particularly those at lower ranks--may feel as lonely and as alienated as the city dweller. The infrequency of communal meetings may contribute to this feeling of estrangement.

The frequency of committee meetings which department members must attend is, of course, directly proportional to the size of the department. A fortunate 31.7 percent of all departments have no committees of any kind; but most of these are small, and together they employ no more than a fifth of the profession. Table 37, which shows how many committees departments of various sizes may have, reveals that the remaining 80 percent of all college English teachers are probably doomed to serve on departmental committees at some time during their professional careers. (Figures are percentages in each category.)

TABLE 37

Number of Departmental Committees

	No committees	Executive committee	1-3 committees	4-6 committees	7-10 committees	Over 10 committees
Small	31.5	5.2	28.4	16.4	1.5	0.8
Medium	22.2	13.9	44.4	19.4	11.1	0
Large	4.7	31.7	17.6	37.6	29.4	10.6
ALL	31.7	15.3	27.0	23.9	12.1	3.9

A distinction may be observed between the executive committee, which has multiple duties and broad powers, and other standing committees (ad hoc committees are not considered here), whose deliberations concern a single segment of the department's program (for example, freshman English) or single but recurrent problems (for example, liaison with the library). The functions of the executive committee, which is often elected and constituted to insure that all ranks will be represented, are to advise the chairman on matters of policy (on which the department as a whole may vote eventually and to relieve him of some administrative tasks; the table above shows that 15.3 percent of all departments (but 31.7 percent of large departments) have such super-committees. Table 38 shows how many departments of each size have special committees of several common types. The committee structure of a large department may be illustrated by the following list of the major committees which the department of English at Indiana University (which had seventy full-time members in 1967) needs in order to conduct its business:

Advisory (an elective executive committee)
Elementary Composition
Freshman Literature
Undergraduate Advising
Undergraduate Study
Undergraduate Honors
Graduate Advising
Graduate Study
Graduate Examinations
Fellowships and Teaching Associate Selection
Teacher Preparation
Library
Prizes and Contests
Lectures, Readings, Occasions and Publicity

All committees except the Advisory Committee are appointed by the chairman, who also appoints ad hoc committees to deal with special problems. Standing committees range in size from five to ten members, and in 1966-67 they consumed the time of fifty-eight teachers (twenty-six of whom served on more than one committee). When one adds to these often onerous duties service on college or university-wide committees (to which, it sometimes seems, members of the English department are appointed with unusual frequency), it may appear that the primary threat to good teaching in American institutions of higher learning is not the demands of scholarship and publication but the heavy burden of committee work imposed on members of the faculty.

Assigning Courses and Planning the Curriculum. Decisions on who will teach what and thus, in many instances, on which courses will be offered are reached by committees in a few departments, but in most they are made by the chairman or his deputy after informal talks with individual members. As Table 39 shows, they are based in an overwhelming majority of cases on practical calculations of available competence rather than on some concept of the perfectly suitable program. (Figures are percentages of all departments of each size which give primary consideration to each matter when courses are assigned.) In well over three-quarters of all schools, then, the chairman determines which of his

TABLE 38

Incidence of Special Committees

	Freshman English	Library	Graduate	Curriculum	Honors	English Major	Teacher Education	Tenure	Promotions	Publications	Other
Small	37.6	15.4	3.4	16.8	12.8	14.1	7.4	3.4	3.4	8.7	10.7
Medium	57.9	31.6	21.1	18.4	15.8	18.4	10.5	5.3	5.3	2.6	26.3
Large	79.3	60.9	77.0	54.0	37.9	33.3	28.7	25.3	25.3	17.2	56.3
ALL	53.5	32.0	29.1	28.7	21.1	20.7	14.5	10.6	10.6	10.6	27.3

TABLE 39

Considerations in Assigning Courses

Size of Department (full-time members)	Available competance of staff	Curriculum balance	Individual preference	Rank	Seniority	Other
0-4	75.6	17.1	7.3			
5-9	79.0	10.5	3.9	2.6	2.6	1.3
10-19	85.2	7.4	7.4			
20-30	91.2	5.8	2.9			
Over 30	80.0	10.0	5.0	2.5		
ALL	82.0	10.2	5.3	1.2	0.8	0.4

department's wares will be displayed by taking an inventory of the stock of competencies on hand; he does not first design an ideal curriculum and then deploy his staff accordingly.[27] Or he may try to do both at once, in an effort to reconcile his supply of competence with the demands of the program he and his colleagues think most feasible and appropriate. Table 40 summarizes replies to the general question, "What do you take most heavily into account as you plan or revise your course offerings for undergraduates?"

TABLE 40

Considerations in Planning Courses

	Need to present a comprehensive set of courses	Available competence of staff	Staff requests	Student preference	Other
Small	82.9	11.4		2.9	2.9
Medium	80.6	11.1	2.8	2.8	2.8
Large	84.8	13.9	0	1.3	0
ALL	83.1	12.2	0.4	2.0	1.9

If these figures seem to contradict those in the previous table, it is probably because the need fully to exploit the faculty's several talents often contra-

[27] Sometimes this practice results in the deprivation of undergraduates: at one eastern university of highest prestige it was impossible for undergraduates to take a course in Victorian literature during a recent year; none was offered because all the local experts in the field were on leave or otherwise occupied.

dicts or conflicts with the need to offer a well-balanced curriculum. The chairman may have to find an assignment for his expert in modern poetry just when his program lacks a course in the literature of the eighteenth century. He would much prefer, of course, to have versatile teachers who could fill all the gaps in his curriculum (which accounts for the fact, previously noted, that a majority of departments now look for teachers of general ability when they recruit new members). Lacking such polymaths, he must somehow accommodate the department's resources to the students' needs, well aware that the compromise he contrives will probably not please everyone.

Rotating Teaching Assignments. In one respect these apparently contradictory tables agree: both suggest that when they turn to the annual agony of assigning the staff and designing the curriculum most chairmen pay some attention to individual preferences but very little to seniority or rank. Departments may indulge a few of their senior members who insist on teaching their favorite courses, but for practical as well as ethical reasons they usually decree that no one may "own" a course. Some go beyond this to insure by various procedures that courses are regularly rotated or swapped. Table 41 shows how widespread this practice has become in institutions of various sizes.

TABLE 41

Rotation of Courses

	Do not rotate courses	Rotate courses	Rotate general courses but not special	Rotate because of schedule	Rotate at choice of instructor	Other
Small	48.2	18.0	12.2	5.0	12.2	12.2
Medium	42.1	11.9	11.8	2.9	2.1	14.7
Large	41.2	25.9	12.9	1.2	10.6	9.4
ALL	51.9	24.8	12.4	3.5	12.8	11.6

Because their complements of specialists are limited, many small departments find it difficult to rotate courses: the man who is fully qualified to teach linguistics must be asked to continue at that post, cannot be allowed to try his hand at teaching the modern novel. Larger departments can afford more mobility, both because they offer a greater variety of courses and because they have a larger stock of teaching competencies. Several of them--those at the University of California, Berkeley, at the University of North Carolina, and at San Francisco State College, for example--encourage their members to undertake the preparation and execution of new courses by redistributing some assignments each year. Typical of those departments whose deployment of manpower available to them permits the rotation of courses is that at the University of Connecticut. There al-

most all undergraduate classes in English are limited to thirty-five students.[28] There are only two large "lecture courses"; when enrollments increase, new sections are added. During the fall of 1968, fourteen of the department's fifty-five members taught the basic course in Shakespeare, ten taught world literature in translation, and nine taught the modern novel. Enrollments were sufficient to justify four classes in American literature of the nineteenth century, three in Romantic literature, and four in the English language (to cite but a few examples). All classes above the freshman level are taught by members of the regular staff, and each teacher proceeds independently, guided only by a loose "gentleman's agreement" on what the course should contain and should try to accomplish. These procedures result in a large supply of teaching assignments and allow each instructor to teach a variety of courses if he wishes. During a recent term one member taught world literature, early American literature, and Shakespeare. Another taught contemporary drama and the British novel. And a third somehow juggled literary criticism, the movern novel, and great narratives. Although most members of the department limit their teaching repertories to three or four courses, opportunities to undertake new assignments are usually available.

The department which can offer such opportunities and can promise that all members will eventually be permitted to teach courses they covet enjoys an advantage in recruiting and in retaining valuable young teachers. Chairmen of certain small departments in which courses have been preempted by senior members report that providing teaching assignments which will engage and satisfy their bright new Ph.D.'s has become a major problem. "All I can give them is freshman English and the sophomore survey course, and that isn't enough," said the chairman of one department in Ohio. Furthermore, students as well as the department benefit when faculty members are allowed to teach those courses they can teach with maximum interest and enthusiasm. Rotation helps to prevent staleness, and it militates against the students' tendency to identify courses or subjects with the personalities of individual instructors. ("Don't take Chaucer: the teacher's no good.") It improves morale not only because it is manifestly an equitable procedure but also because it insures that department members will have teaching experiences in common, will be less likely to withdraw into their specialties. Some critics of rotation argue that it results in ill-informed, amateurish teaching; its advocates reply that most well-trained members of this profession are quite competent to prepare new courses appropriate to undergraduate instruction if they are given a year in which to do so. It may also be true that, as one old hand has said, "you teach best when you are most nervous, most aware of your own inadequacies."

Effecting Uniformity in Sectioned Courses. Should the course in Shakespeare, taught simultaneously by fourteen instructors, turn out a uniform product? Should

---

[28] Not, as one might suppose, an unusually small number. The great majority of college English classes taught in this country today consist of from ten to thirty students. Even in large institutions the most common enrollment is from thirty to forty students. See page 146.

the same texts be taught at the same pace in the same ways to communicate a specific body of knowledge and understanding which can be measured by a common examination? Some teachers, impressed by the uncertainty which attends all educational enterprises, think it impossible to achieve uniformity, either of instruction or of product, and they urge their departments simply to have faith in the teachers they have hired, leaving them to their own best devices. They are persuaded that freedom to teach according to one's own style and at one's own gait is more valuable than assurance that, no matter which section they have attended, all students have had the same course. Others are nagged by the realization that the entry, "English 230," on a student's record may or may not mean that he has read Richard II or that he has acquired information about the conventions of the Elizabethan stage. Most multi-class courses are required in one way or another, and these teachers are inclined to agree with Albert R. Kitzhaber when he says (with dubious logic), "A required . . . course in a basic academic subject such as English ought to have a certain degree of uniformity from section to section, else it ought not to be required."[29] They would not propose that teachers of sectioned courses march in lockstep, but they believe that all legitimate means to achieve uniformity should be tried. About 90 percent of those departments which have sectioned courses subscribe to this view, and Table 42 shows the means they use to effect uniformity. (Figures are percentages of all departments which have sectioned courses; many use more than one procedure.)

TABLE 42

Means of Achieving Course Uniformity

Staff meetings	68.0
Common syllabus	61.9
Common readings*	61.5
Common examinations	21.9
Common lectures	12.2
Common textbooks*	5.7
Common theme grading	1.2
Other	8.5

*Usually selected by a committee of those teaching the course; 30.6 percent allow individual instructors to select their own texts for sectioned courses.

If any or all of these practices result in fruitful collaboration and in the improvement of courses, they may be justified, whether or not they succeed as devices to insure uniformity. If, on the other hand, they stifle originality and discourage experimentation, they may be harmful to programs and disastrous for morale. In this, as in many other matters which affect many members of the department and large parts of its

---

[29] Themes, Theories, and Therapy (New York, 1963), p. 39. Kitzhaber is speaking of freshman English, of course. He might not demand the same degree of uniformity at higher levels.

curriculum, much depends on how liberally and how tactfully regulations are administered.

Beneath this debate over departmental procedures lies a truly profound question, which arises in one version or another almost every time uniformity of teaching is discussed. It is the question of whether there can be--or ought to be--a right way to teach college English. This, in turn, raises the most disturbing question of all: Is English a discipline? Is it, as other disciplines claim to be, a systematic study of a limited body of evidence and interpretation? Or is it, as many would assert, a continuous activity, which leads to no certainty or conclusion and which is justified only as long as it enhances the aesthetic experience afforded by the materials it addresses? Those who believe that courses can be packaged tend to take the former position. Those who resist the regulation of teaching tend to take the latter. Many other debates which exercise the profession, from the running battle over freshman English to the continuing argument over requirements for the major, may also be seen as disputes between these rival concepts of English as an academic enterprise.

Teaching Loads

Only 10 percent of all English departments are allowed to set their own teaching loads (see Table 8); the rest must bargain with their deans and provosts to obtain and maintain the lightest load which the needs and resources of the institution will allow. It should be of great value to a department engaged in such negotiations to be able to compare its lot with those of other departments in institutions of similar or different sizes and kinds in various parts of the nation. As administrators themselves are aware, the department must offer an attractive teaching load if it is to compete successfully in the market for college teachers of English. In the following sections of this report teaching loads are analyzed in a number of ways, so that departments may determine just how much teaching is required at institutions they may seek to emulate or surpass.[30]

National Percentages. About 50 percent of all English departments in the nation have a normal teaching load of 12 hours. This is by far the most common

---

[30]A distinction must be made between the normal teaching load and the total work load: by the former we mean the number of class hours taught per week by a full-time member of the department; the latter would include the many other professional duties--preparing courses, correcting papers, counseling, and so forth--which are required of English teachers. Although it might be possible to devise an elaborate formula for determining total work loads, it would probably not be profitable to do so, because there are so many variations, not only among departments but also among individual teachers and their work habits, that comparisons would have little meaning. The preamble to the "Statement on the Workload of the College Teacher" which NCTE issued in 1965 in College English, 28 (October 1966) provides a useful review of most of the elements which compose the total work load.

load. The percentage of all departments which have each normal teaching load is shown in Table 43. NCTE's statement of policy on workloads de-

TABLE 43

Teaching Loads

	Percent of all departments
6 hour load:	.7
6 hour load one term, 9 hour load the next:	2.5
9 hour load:	16.4
9 hour load one term, 12 hour load the next:	10.4
12 hour load:	49.2
12 hour load one term, 15 hour load the next:	5.4
15 hour load:	15.0

clares that "a weekly teaching load of no more than nine hours should be considered the standard load for college teachers of English. And under no circumstances should any English teacher's weekly load exceed 12 hours."[31] Table 43 reveals that at present 80 percent of all college English departments in America have teaching loads in excess of the "standard" load recommended by the NCTE, and 20 percent have loads in excess of the maximum they prescribe.

Visits to many of their campuses disclose, however, that among most departments of high prestige (that is, those which are thought by members of the profession to offer unusually good programs for undergraduates) the most common normal teaching load is nine hours. And it would probably be accurate to say that in order to compete with these departments for first-rate candidates, all others must offer loads which do not exceed nine hours. Thus, the profession may be moving towards the standard set by NCTE. Some departments (for example, those at Amherst College and Rochester University) now require only six hours of teaching from members at all ranks, and others are reducing their loads accordingly. The tutorial load at most of these institutions is unusually high, however: instructors may be asked to meet individually for an hour a week with three or four honors students or others entitled to special privileges.

Teaching Loads in Relation to Size of Classes. Table 44 enables us to relate the number of class hours normally taught per week to typical

---

[31] Ibid., p. 57.

enrollments. Class sizes may vary greatly at individual institutions, and the best description of representative enrollments (or "student loads") is provided not by the average or mean but by the mode or most common class size. In Table 44 enrollment modes or typical class sizes are related to teaching loads; these figures reveal which class size is most common in departments with each teaching load. (Note that no provision is made for modes above forty-nine students. This is because no department reported that its typical class had fifty or more students.) It is apparent that classes in departments which have nine-hour

TABLE 44

Teaching Loads and Class Size

Normal Work Loads	Enrollment Modes 0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49
6 hours	Too few examples				
6 and 9 hours	0	42.9	57.1	0	0
9 hours	0	35.3	32.4	26.5	5.9
9 and 12 hours	3.1	41.3	31.0	10.3	13.4
12 hours	3.1	33.6	35.9	25.2	2.3
12 and 15 hours	0	50.0	25.0	25.0	0
15 hours	4.9	46.3	26.8	17.1	4.9

loads are of about the same size as those in departments which have twelve hour loads; teachers in the latter simply have one more class or about 25 percent more students (and they may have one more course to prepare). Departments which are so unfortunate as to teach fifteen hours a week usually have smaller classes, but their total teaching loads are higher. A very common combination is a teaching load of twelve hours and an enrollment mode of about 30 students. A teacher whose total assignment falls into this category is responsible for the instruction of about 120 students each term--too many, perhaps, to allow him to give proper attention to the needs of each.

Geographical Distribution. Heavy teaching loads are more common in the southeastern and south central sections of the United States than in other sections, as Table 45 shows. Their relatively heavy teaching loads combine with other factors to make it difficult for many southern schools to attract good teachers from other parts of the country, and this in turn aggravates provincialism and impairs the programs they offer undergraduates. "There's no use our interviewing candidates at MLA," one chairman in Louisiana said. "As soon as we mention our fifteen-hour load, they aren't interested."

TABLE 45

Teaching Loads in Geographical Regions

	6	6 & 9	9	9 & 12	12	12 & 15	15
Southeast	0	2.0	9.8	9.8	41.2	5.9	31.4
South Central	0	0	8.7	17.4	39.1	8.7	26.1
Great Lakes	1.2	5.9	15.3	9.4	43.5	10.6	14.1
West and Southwest	0	8.0	25.6	2.6	53.8	2.6	10.3
North Atlantic	1.3	1.3	20.3	11.9	60.1	0	5.1

Teaching Loads in Relation to Size of School and Department. In general, teaching loads vary in inverse proportion to the size of the school and the size of the department. That is, heavier teaching loads are more common in smaller schools and departments than in larger. As Table 46 shows, they are heavier in departments which do not offer graduate programs than in those which do.

TABLE 46

Teaching Loads in Schools with and without Graduate Programs

	9	12	15
With	21.6	45.1	12.6
Without	13.1	52.4	16.7

In Tables 47 and 48 figures are percentages of all departments in each class.

TABLE 47

Teaching Loads and School Size

	6	6 & 9	9	9 & 12	12	12 & 15	15
Small	1.3	2.6	13.2	9.9	50.0	5.9	17.1
Medium	0	3.9	19.9	5.8	54.9	3.9	11.8
Large	0	1.3	21.1	14.5	44.7	5.3	13.2

TABLE 48

Teaching Loads and Department Size

Full-time Members	6	6 & 9	9	9 & 12	12	12 & 15	15
0-9	1.5	1.5	10.0	10.0	53.5	6.4	17.1
10-19		3.8	25.8	8.1	45.2	3.2	14.5
20-29		8.1	8.1	13.5	46.0	10.8	13.5
30-39			17.6	11.8	52.9		11.8
40-49			28.6		57.1		14.3
50-59			14.3	14.3	57.1		14.3
60-69			80.0		20.0		
70-79			100.0				
80-99			33.3	67.0			

The implications of these figures are consistent with the implications of those which relate size of school to the type of competency sought in candidates (whether specialized or general, that is; see Table 11) and to criteria for tenure and promotion (see Table 26): when all these statistics are combined, they confirm one's impression that small schools are more likely than large to select teachers of general ability, to value teaching over scholarly publication, and to expect their faculty members to teach long hours. That departments with large teaching loads must seek teachers of general ability and cannot insist on scholarly productivity is clearly indicated by Table 49. (Figures are percentages of departments with each of the three most common teaching loads.) It is clear that emphasis on general teaching ability increases as more teaching

TABLE 49

Competencies and Criteria by Load

Competencies Sought	9	12	15
General	26.7	53.6	73.8
Specialist	46.6	35.5	14.3
Both	37.7	18.1	11.9

(continued)

TABLE 49
(Continued)

Primary Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

	9	12	15
Teaching Competence	54.7	71.2	71.1
Scholarship and Publication	28.6	6.1	2.6

is demanded. Or one might say that the more teaching they require, the less expert knowledge departments can expect.

Exceptions to the Normal Teaching Load: Reduced Loads. In 16.5 percent of all English departments there are no reduced loads; everyone teaches the full number of hours. Other departments reduce loads for reasons shown in Table 50. (Figures are percentages of all departments.)

TABLE 50

Reasons for Reduced Loads

Chairman	58.1
Assistant Chairman	7.2
Director of Freshman English	12.9
Director of Graduate Study	9.3
Other administrative duties	27.6
Special nonteaching duties	26.9
Special teaching assignments	13.3
Research and publication	24.0
Rank	2.5
Seniority	0.8
Other reasons	10.7

With the exception of the chairman, whose teaching load has already been discussed (see Table 32), members of the department who serve in the capacities listed above are usually granted a reduction of three hours or one course. It is notable that very few departments award lighter teaching loads simply on the basis of seniority or rank, and that almost a quarter of all departments now reduce some members' loads in order to allow them more time for private research and publication. Table 51 (which has percentages of all departments of each size) reveals that this practice is especially common among larger departments and departments which offer graduate programs in English. Such reductions are intended, like sabbatical leaves, to enable faculty members to pursue scholarly enterprises which will enrich their courses and enhance their department's prestige. Students and administrators on some campuses have complained, however, that the actual effect is to distract teachers from teaching, which further impoverishes already inadequate programs. They fear, and with some justice, that English

TABLE 51

Reducing Loads for Research

Department Size	Porcentage Reducing Loads for Research
0-9	13.6
10-19	27.4
20-29	40.5
30-39	23.5
40-49	85.7
50-59	85.7
70 and above	33.3
Departments with Graduate Programs:	30.0
Departments without Graduate Programs:	14.8

teachers may seek to emulate their colleagues in the sciences, so many of whom now devote most of their time to subsidized research rather than to teaching.

The English Department's Teaching Load in Comparison with Those of Other Departments. "Is this one of the terms you teach?" Professor Ephim Fogel, chairman of the department of English at Cornell University, says he was recently asked this charmingly naive question by a neighbor who is a scientist. A single slip of this kind may seem to confirm the college English teacher's dark suspicion that he alone is laboring to sustain undergraduate education in America. Too often, however, his is only a paranoid suspicion: precisely how many hours per week each of his colleagues in other fields must spend in the classroom, he does not know. And how his total workload compares with theirs he can only guess. He has heard of foreign language teachers who have twenty-hour loads and of scientists who must hold laboratory classes every afternoon. Finally, when pressed to decide whether or not his teaching load is equitable he may grant that it probably is. Of all departments of English, 81 percent believe that, if their information is correct, their teaching loads compare favorably with those of other departments on their campuses. Some exceptions are revealed by Table 52, which relates departments' estimates in this matter to their normal teaching loads.[32]

---

[32]A curious pattern emerges from these figures: it would appear that the larger its teaching load, the more likely the English department is to believe that its load compares favorably with others. Perhaps this helps to explain why some departments are willing to suffer unusually heavy loads: theirs is the general lot at the institutions to which they belong, they suppose, and they assume therefore that very little can be done to improve that lot.

TABLE 52

How the English Department's Teaching Load
Is Thought to Compare with Others

Hours	Compares favorably	Lighter than others	Heavier than others	More papers	More students per instructor	Sciences' loads lighter	Other
6	50.0						50.0
6 and 9	71.4		14.3				14.3
9	76.1	4.0	8.7	2.2	2.2	10.9	
9 and 12	75.8	6.9	10.3	3.4	6.9	3.4	
12	82.6	2.4	4.3	8.0	3.6	3.6	
12 and 15	93.3	6.0	6.0		6.0		
15	85.7	2.3	7.1	4.7	2.3		2.3

There are those who would argue that these statistics prove only that departments of English delude themselves. A thorough computation and comparison of workloads throughout the faculty would prove, they say, that English teachers are required to work much harder than most. They would urge members of the profession to assert their rights and to insist on lighter loads commensurate with those of faculty members in other departments. This proposal, though certainly attractive to teachers of English, may fail to impress those administrators who have the authority to regulate teaching loads if it is not accompanied by a comprehensive review of the English department's function. How many hours the department is asked to teach is clearly dependent on what it is asked to accomplish--and, perhaps even more important, on what provinces and prerogatives it claims for itself. If it is overburdened, it may be because, in its greed, it has gathered to itself tasks which were best delegated to others.

CHAPTER II

THE DEPARTMENT'S GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Function of the Department of English

In one important respect the department of English is unique among the several faculties which serve at American colleges and universities: it alone has something all others must use. It is possible to practice many disciplines without using mathematics, or the methods of the social sciences, or the techniques of the sciences, but no discipline can be practiced without the use of English. As the college or university's principal authority on its common language, the English department inevitably claims or is delegated a kind of monopoly which is denied all other departments. Words are its stock in trade, and its goods are everywhere in demand. But the prosperity which accrues to the department because of the very nature of its subject often proves an embarrassment of riches, which distracts the department from its goals, dissipates its energies, and greatly complicates its efforts to define its function. Because its specialty is not special but common, because its province is at once limited and general, the department cannot say, as others may, "Our function is to give students something which is new to them, which has intrinsic value, and which they can get only from us." Instead, it must concede that its services are often sought only as preparation for the practice of other disciplines or professions, and that almost everything it has to offer is already in the common domain.

Until quite recently--say, within the past two decades--most departments of English proceeded blithely to exploit their singular monopoly and to expand their empires province by province. Undisturbed by the paradox that their wealth was largely a consequence of their having so little they could call their own, they gladly embraced almost every academic enterprise which could somehow be said to pertain to their discipline. The late William Riley Parker, who wrote the first critical history of the department of English as an institution, described its sudden growth late in the last century and its steady proliferation thereafter. English, he says, was

> strongly affected by the educational events of the 1880's and 1890's. . . . This was a period in which the whole structure of higher education in America underwent profound changes, yielding to the pressures of new learning, the elective system, increased specialization, acceptance of the idea that practical or useful courses had a place in higher education, and, not least in importance, the actual doubling of college enrollments during the last quarter of the century. . . . It was in this atmosphere that "English" in the United States very recently became an accepted subject, grew to maturity, over-reached itself, and planted deeply the seeds of most of its subsequent troubles as an academic discipline. Early chairmen and early professors of

English literature were willing if not eager to increase the prestige of their subject and the numbers of their students and course offerings by embracing, not only linguistics . . . , but also rhetoric, which normally included, of course, oratory, elocution, and all forms of written composition.

It is well to remind ourselves, Mr. Parker says,

of the full scope of the aggressiveness (some would say acquisitiveness) exhibited by departments of "English." They were later to embrace, just as greedily, journalism, business writing, creative writing, writing for engineers, play-writing, drama and theater, and American literature, and were eventually to be offering courses in contemporary literature, comparative literature, the Bible and world classics in translation, American civilization, the humanities, and "English for foreigners." In sum, English departments became the catchall for the work of teachers of extremely diverse interests and training, united theoretically but not actually by their common use of the mother tongue.[1]

The history of the department of English, then, has been one of aggrandizement, uneasy federation, and eventual dissolution. During the first scramble for power it was presumed that almost any course or program which was devoted to a study of the English language and its uses was fit prey for the English department. Later it became apparent that many of the subsidiaries English had seized were so specialized, so diversified, and so popular in their own right that a common concern for language was too dilute a bond to cement their federation. Thus, the department began to divest itself or to be relieved of several of its functions. "Little by little English departments lost journalism, speech, and the theater, and recently we have seen the development of separate undergraduate departments of comparative literature and linguistics. There have [even] been polylingual grumblings from foreign language departments about the English department monopoly of courses in world literature."[2] Most departments have relinquished their adjunct programs as gladly as they once appropriated them: the demand for their courses in literature, which they rightly consider the core of their curriculum, has continued to grow, and they are happy to consolidate their realm by surrendering provinces they probably should never have acquired in the first place. Now, in the third quarter of the century, it is still difficult to define "English" as a discipline, but it is possible to delimit the department's domain and to approach a reckoning of its responsibilities. This is best done by a process of elimination--that is, by determining just how many departments retain which peripheral functions and how many have abandoned them.

---

[1] "Where Do English Departments Come From?" College English, 28 (February 1967), 348.

[2] Parker, p. 350.

Adjunct Programs

Journalism. Courses in journalism are offered by 32.5 percent of the departments of English in four-year colleges and universities; over two-thirds of all departments no longer feel obliged to provide such quasi-professional training. The number varies with the size of the department and the size of the institution (Table 53).

TABLE 53

Journalism

Number of full-time members	Percentage offering journalism courses
0-4	29.4
5-9	29.9
10-19	44.3
20-29	31.4
30 and above	26.1
Size of Institution	
Small	28.9
Medium	47.5
Large	31.8
ALL	32.5

Departments of medium size--say, from ten to twenty members--are most likely to retain their courses in journalism, probably because they cannot ignore the demand for such courses and there is no one else to teach them. Few small departments can afford to offer these courses, and at most large institutions journalism is now taught by a separate faculty.

Speech. An even smaller number of departments of English continue to provide courses in speech. Professor Parker reminds us that "English was born about 100 years ago (and) its mother . . . was Oratory--or what we now prefer to call public speaking or, simply, speech."[3]

---

[3] P.340.

Now over 70 percent of all English departments have disengaged themselves from their parent discipline. Only 28.9 percent offer courses in speech, and the percentage is much higher among small departments than among large (Table 54).

TABLE 54

Speech

Number of full-time members	Percentage offering speech courses
0 - 4	43.1
5 - 9	35.6
10 - 19	31.1
20 - 29	17.1
30 and up	6.5

The recent revival of the study of rhetoric in courses in written composition might suggest that a rapprochement of English and oratory may soon be effected; certain texts (for example, the speeches of Adlai Stevenson and Martin Luther King, Jr.) and the commentaries of certain critics (notably Kenneth Burke) are now the common property of both speech and English courses. And if Marshall McLuhan's analysis of "the movement away from book-culture toward oral communication" has any validity, it will surely become necessary for English teachers to devote more and more attention to the spoken word. At present, however, the gap between the departments of English and speech seems to be widening, and neither manifests much inclination to bridge it.

Theater and Dramatics. Though English departments teach dramatic literature, only a very few--3.6 percent of the total--now offer courses in acting or the techniques of the theater. On many campuses those who are competent to conduct such courses have joined those who teach public speaking in a separate department of speech and drama. Collaboration between that faculty and the department of English may have great benefits for both: English teachers are properly embarrassed by the realization that the plays they discuss with their students were not written to be apprehended from the page, and they welcome opportunities to share performances with their students. Too often, however, the dissociation of dramatics and English in the organizational structure of the institution results in rivalry and backbiting as both compete to assert their rights to represent the playwrights.

Technical and Business Writing. Of all departments, 32.9 percent teach technical (and/or scientific) writing, and 10.9 percent offer instruction in writing

business correspondence and reports.[4] These are frankly identified as service courses, designed to prepare students to communicate effectively in the worlds of technology, science, and commerce. They are devoted entirely to the analysis and composition of what is called (with unfortunate imprecision) "expository prose," and the values they foster are almost exclusively those of the professions they serve. Members of the department who teach in these programs are often an embattled band, who see themselves slighted and their courses depreciated by their literary colleagues. Fred H. Macintosh, Director of Advanced Composition at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, expressed typical pique when he defined the problems which beset his enterprise. They are

> increasing enrollments; virtually no trained people to staff growing programs; no programs to train teachers for these courses; almost no English teachers with writing experience outside the academic world (and very few with realistic notions of the writing situations and criteria outside academe); control of these courses by chairmen who have long thought primarily in terms of literature courses, literary scholarship, and English majors preparing to teach literature.[5]

It is not surprising, therefore, that some teachers of technical and business writing who feel neglected have seceded from the department of English to establish separate programs under the auspices of schools of engineering, science, and business administration.

English as a Second Language. Years ago it was rumored that, because no special provision was made for their instruction, most foreign students at Harvard were automatically awarded a "Chinese C" when they took courses in English. No such polite evasion is now necessary. Within the past twenty years a new pedagogy, informed with the insights of modern linguistics, has developed to meet the specific needs of students who come to this country inadequately prepared to cope with studies conducted in English. Courses in English as a second language are now offered to both undergraduate and graduate students at many of those institutions which annually attract appreciable numbers of foreigners. At least three diagnostic examinations have been devised to identify those who need help, and specially trained teachers

---

[4] These figures may not reveal the full extent to which these subjects are taught by departments of English, because on many campuses technical and business writing are subsumed under the general title "Advanced Composition" (offered by 72.2 percent of all departments; see p. 159), or the courses so titled include a discussion of technical and business writing.

[5] Notes prepared for interview.

make every effort to correct faults of oral and written expression, many of which may be attributed to differences which linguists can detect between the student's native language and English. Although the demand for these courses will probably never be very large on any one campus, because the number of foreign students attending most American colleges and universities is not large,[6] English as a second language has already emerged as a new profession, adjunct to English but separate from it in purpose and methods.[7]

Here, then, is a small but impeccable enterprise which English departments might be expected jealously to embrace if they were determined to preserve or to enlarge their empires. At present, however, only 20 percent of all English departments offer courses in English as a second language, and on several campuses this new province has already been annexed by other departments--with the full consent and approval of the department of English. Where there are separate departments of linguistics (as at the University of Michigan and the University of Connecticut), English as a second language has usually been assigned to them; elsewhere it is taught by members of the department of foreign languages or by a separate staff. In this instance as in others, the English department has displayed none of its old rapacity and has freely acknowledged the ability of others to perform teaching tasks it might once have reserved for itself.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Of all English departments 18.9 percent have no adjunct programs, provide no special service courses. Among the 81 percent which do, the majority devote less than 10 percent of their total teaching effort to such ancillary offerings, as Table 55 shows.

---

[6] 110,315 foreign students were enrolled at 1,927 institutions of higher learning in the United States in 1967-1968. About 17,000 of these came from English-speaking nations, and many others needed no special coaching in English. Widespread use of the diagnostic examinations as screening devices should insure that even fewer foreign students whose command of English is deficient are admitted in the future. Furthermore, the total number of foreign students--and thus the demand for courses in English as a second language--is likely to decrease during the next few years, because the war in Viet Nam has diverted funds from federally financed exchange programs: Congress has failed to vote an appropriation for the International Education Act of 1966, and even the twenty-year-old Fulbright-Hays program is threatened. Full information may be found in Open Doors: 1968 (Washington, D. C.: Institute of International Education)

[7] Recently experts in this new field asserted their professional independence by founding their own association, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, or TESOL.

TABLE 55

Adjunct Programs

Pe cent of total load devoted to adjunct programs*	Percent of departments offering adjunct programs**
01-09	60.2
10-19	21.8
20-29	11.1
30-39	3.7
Over 40	2.2

*Also includes methods of teaching English, children's literature, developmental reading, writing clinic (see remedial English, page 87), and others such as study methods, editing and proofreading, and library science.

**These figures do not vary greatly with the type of institution, but, contrary to expectation, departments in private schools devote slightly more of their total efforts to service courses than departments in public schools.

For most departments, then, the auxiliary programs the profession preempted early in this century do not now constitute a very large commitment. Those who conduct these programs form a small (and often disgruntled) minority within the department, and persuading new members of the profession to teach such courses is proving more and more difficult. Certainly the general trend is toward decentralization and delegation, toward retrenchment within the department, toward consolidating its curriculum and relinquishing functions and power it once coveted. As a result, many English departments now retain only one service obligation--but that is the largest and most vexatious of all.

Freshman English

"Surprising as the idea may first appear to you," writes Professor Parker, "there was, of course, no compelling reason at the outset why the teaching of composition should have been entrusted to teachers of the English language and literature."[8] It was, he says, almost by historical accident that composition was originally consigned to the English department.

[8] Parker, p. 347.

> To sum up: the ancient subject of rhetoric, which at first showed signs of adapting itself to changing times while preserving both its integrity and its vitality, in the nineteenth century lost both integrity and independent vitality by dispersing itself to academic thinness. It permitted oratory to become identified with elocution, and, as for written composition, it allowed this to become chiefly identified with that dismal, unflowering desert, freshman theme-writing. It is little wonder that speech and composition were readily accepted by administrators as appendices of English literature.[9]

Over 70 percent of all departments of English have since relinquished their claim to the first of these appendices, "but 'English' has somehow managed to hold on stubbornly to all written composition not intended for oral delivery--a subject which has always had a most tenuous connection with the academic study of language and literature, but which, not incidentally, from the outset has been a great secret strength for 'English' with both administrators and public, and latterly has made possible the frugal subsidizing of countless graduate students who cannot wait to escape it."[10] What was acquired by default has become the largest single component of the American college and university curriculum and a program so crucial to the welfare of English departments that it conditions most of what they do.

The Magnitude of Freshman English. In fall 1967, four-year colleges and universities in the United States enrolled 1,338,474 freshmen.[11] Of these institutions, 93.2 percent required at least one term of English. Even if 20 percent of all entering students were granted exemption (and the actual figure was probably smaller than that), the number enrolled in freshman English was well over one million. About 75 percent of these students were required to take a second term as well, so the total number of credits awarded for freshman English (or the total number of hours students spent in freshman classes) during the full year was about five and one half million. The number of papers written and corrected may well have exceeded fifteen million--a figure to send the mind reeling!

Although only 31.3 percent of all undergraduates were freshmen and not all freshmen took English, departments of English devoted over 40 percent of their total teaching effort to this gigantic education effort. (Table 56 shows that, for reasons difficult to divine, this figure varied in direct proportion to the size of the school.)

---

[9] P. 349.

[10] P. 350.

[11] Opening Fall Enrollment in Higher Education, 1967 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), Table 4, p.9.

TABLE 56

English Department's Teaching Load Devoted to Freshman English

Size of School	Percent of Load
Small	37.8
Medium	42.5
Large	44.8
AVERAGE	40.7

The principal reason for the 10 percent discrepancy is, of course, that many students take no English after their freshman year, and therefore the bulk of the department's clientele is freshmen. Furthermore, freshman English is especially costly of teaching manpower and time: the number of students taught in each class is small, and the number of papers which must be read is large. It is ironic that the course or program which serves the largest mass of students is one of those least amenable to mass instruction. The result is that freshman English makes enormous demands on the department, and how well those demands are met proves a good index of the department's general health.

Who Teaches Freshman English. The most populous course in the English department's curriculum is usually the least popular with its members, principally because teaching freshman English entails great amounts of repetitive work. A course in composition inevitably produces compositions, and these must be read. The prospect of correcting piles of freshman themes and of discussing elementary topics with beginning students prompts many instructors, especially those of senior rank, to avoid participation in the freshman program. Many others recognize, however, that this arduous assignment has its own rewards, that most freshmen are fresh, responsive, and a pleasure to teach, and that, precisely because they are fundamental, the questions one must raise in freshman classes are among the most difficult and the most intriguing any professional student of language and literature may address. Certainly it is clear that unless the department persuades a sufficient number of its best teachers to accept this assignment, its freshman program becomes a kind of ghetto, slighted by students and staff alike. Table 56 shows who teaches freshman English in institutions of different kinds and sizes throughout the nation. It reveals that in a majority of departments this responsibility is shared by all or most members. But this does not mean that a majority of American freshmen are taught by experienced, full-time teachers of English. Note first that the percentage of private schools in which all members of the department teach freshman English is significantly larger than the percentage of public schools (with sectarian schools falling in between). And the percentage of public schools which employ graduate students to teach their

TABLE 57

Who Teaches Freshman English

	All regular members of department	All except chairman	All except specialists	All except graduate faculty	All except those with otherwise heavy loads	All except those whose schedules preclude	Most (no explanation)	Regular members and graduate students	Graduate students only	Other*
Public	33.0	10.4	12.3	4.7	3.8	9.4	4.7	34.9	2.8	14.2
Private	57.4	11.7	4.4	4.4	1.1	5.5	1.1	12.7	2.2	17.8
Sectarian	43.6	10.3	5.1	1.3	2.6	15.4	5.2	6.4	0	27.0
Number of Full-Time Members										
0 - 4	51.0	11.8	0	0	2.0	11.8	2.0	2.0	0	31.4
5 - 9	59.3	9.3	4.7	2.4	2.4	10.5	5.8	1.2	0	14.0
10 - 19	50.0	13.3	6.7	1.7	3.4	3.4	1.7	26.6	3.4	13.3
20 - 29	20.0	14.3	17.1	11.4	5.7	14.3	8.6	34.3	2.9	22.9
30 and up	17.4	6.5	17.4	6.5	0	10.9	0	52.2	4.3	19.6
Graduate program	56.6	12.5	4.8	0	2.4	8.3	4.8	49.5	0	19.6
No graduate program	23.4	8.4	13.1	9.3	1.9	12.1	1.9	0.6	4.7	18.7

*Includes "senior members exempt," "freshmen taught by special staff," "freshmen taught by part-time instructors," and other anomalies.

freshman courses is appreciably greater than the percentage of private institutions. It follows, of course, that the student who is admitted to a private college or university (and who can afford to attend) enjoys a much better chance of studying English with an experienced (and properly paid) instructor than his opposite number at the state college or university does. This may be the only qualitative difference between the brands of freshman English offered at private and at public institutions. In most other respects--size of classes, content of courses, texts used, and number of papers assigned--freshman English programs are now much alike at public, private, and sectarian schools; or those differences which do occur are not attributable to differences in types of institutions. But the freshman who enters a small private college (at an extra cost to his parents of about $2,500 a year) will probably be taught by a man who also teaches seniors majoring in English, whereas his high school classmate who enters a large state university will probably be taught by a graduate student who was himself a senior majoring in English only a few years before.

It is quite possible, however, that the freshman who studies with a graduate teaching assistant will find his English classes more stimulating than will the student who works with a senior member of the department. The teaching abilities of graduate students probably vary among them just about as those of full-time members of the profession do: some are imaginative and well informed, others are dull. But all enjoy a special advantage because of the proximity of their age to their students' and because of their fresh enthusiasm for teaching. In this sense they and their freshmen are well matched. The fact remains, however, that the graduate student <u>does</u> lack experience, both as a teacher and as a scholar-critic, and because he lacks experience he lacks versatility, his repertoire of means is limited, and often he must teach out of poverty of knowledge and insight. Departments which conduct graduate programs should--indeed, must--provide such apprenticeships, but, as the Allen report suggests, they "should regard [his] teaching as part of the [graduate] student's education, not as a means of staffing courses."

Although only about 20 percent of <u>all</u> departments employ graduate students to teach freshman courses, a majority of departments at large, public institutions (which educate most American undergraduates) do so. The average ratio of full-time teachers to graduate students on the freshman English staffs of those departments which have graduate programs is 1:1; that is, about half the members of the staff are teachers of some experience and about half are apprentices.[12] At several very large universities, however, no such nice balance is maintained: at Kansas State University the ratio is 1:4, at Purdue it is 1:5, at U.C.L.A. 1:10, and at the University of Illinois (Cnampaign-Urbana) 1:30. Such overdependence on--or exploitation of--teaching assistants may have unfortunate consequences at both ends of the department's curriculum: its freshman program comes to rely on its graduate program for inexpensive manpower, and its graduate program is subsidized to a large degree by

---

[12] It should be added that the graduate students often teach more sections than the regular members of the staff.

its freshman program. Neither program benefits from this unhealthy relationship; in a certain sense each preys on the other. A number of departments have recently taken steps to eliminate this excessive interdependence. An example is that at the University of Pennsylvania, where almost all of freshman English was taught by graduate students until 1966. Since then the department has made a number of four-year fellowships available to candidates for the Ph.D. These subsidies call for only one year of service as an "apprentice-teacher" (serving as an assistant to a full-time member of the staff) and one year as a teaching assistant (during which the graduate student conducts one section of freshman English). The plan requires inducing many members of the regular staff to return to teaching freshmen, and this has been achieved in part by revising the freshman program to convert courses in composition to courses in literature and composition (see page 98 below); eventually at least 50 percent of Pennsylvania's freshmen will be taught by experienced faculty members. This is a costly solution, but any bold attack on such a large problem must entail great expense. Even if the department's freshman program is reduced in size or eliminated entirely (possibilities soon to be discussed), the need to support its graduate students will remain.

Remedial English. In 1960 a survey conducted by NCTE found that 55.6 percent of all four-year colleges and universities in America provided special remedial instruction for students who were "deficient in their use of English."[13] Since then the number of institutions which offer remedial English has decreased dramatically: now only 27 percent, or less than half the previous number, continue to do so. This means that within the past seven years over one quarter of all departments in the nation have felt they could justly abandon their courses for inadequately trained freshmen.[14] If this means, in turn, that the number of such students arriving at four-year colleges and universities has diminished appreciably and that the general level of competence in composition of entering students is rising, it has heartening implications for the future of freshman English and of undergraduate programs in general. To these implications we will return later in this report.

Meanwhile, some 470 departments evidently believe they must continue to expend part of their (probably inadequate) resources on these subcollegiate college courses. Many of them are in large, public institutions, where, as Table 58 reveals, remedial English is most common. Possibly because such courses are still offered throughout the University of California system, remedial English is much more common in the West than in other parts of the nation.

---

[13] James R. Squire et al., The National Interest and the Teaching of English (Champaign, 1961), p. 109.

[14] A counterwave or reversal of this trend may occur as more and more institutions actively recruit or offer open admission to disadvantaged students. Thus, in 1969, for the first time in its history, Dartmouth hired an instructor specifically to teach remedial English. His classes are composed largely of black students, who now constitute 10 percent of Dartmouth's freshman class.

TABLE 58

Remedial English

Size of School	Percent of all departments which offer remedial English
Small	27
Medium	23
Large	42
Type of School	
Public	45
Private	23
Location of School	
West	46
Southeast	39
South Central	35
Great Lakes and Plains	32
East	17

Many of the large, public institutions which have retained their remedial programs are located in states where, as Albert Kitzhaber puts it, "legal requirements prevent selective admission."[15] One of these is Nevada. There are no junior colleges in that state, and the university is compelled by law to admit every graduate of a Nevada high school who wishes to attend. About 10 percent of those who are admitted are "unable in placement examinations to demonstrate the proficiency in expression normally expected of high school graduates" (to quote the English department's manual for freshmen) and are assigned to English A, a remedial course which "affords extensive practice in elementary composition, together with a review of the fundamentals of English grammar and usage."[16]

---

[15] Themes, Theories and Therapy, p. 18.

[16] Other state universities which are not allowed to deny admission but which have no remedial programs regularly fail large numbers of beginning students. Thus, the University of Northern Texas must admit all but the lowest 10 percent of those who apply from Texas high schools; it abandoned its remedial courses several years ago, and in recent years about one-third of its freshmen have failed their courses in English.

This describes the typical remedial course and the procedures used to identify those students who need it. In most cases the course consists of little more than elementary drill in the mechanics of language. Three weeks may be devoted to "The Predicate," another two to "Basic Punctuation," and so forth. Textbooks are primers of the kind used in some junior high schools. And, as Kitzhaber noted, "The papers [assigned] are nearly always short--no more than a page or two--and often may consist of only a single paragraph. . . . A large proportion of the writing is done in class, sometimes all of it."[17] There can be little intellectual substance in these courses, which the students aptly call "bonehead English."

Some colleges and universities assign students to remedial English if their high school grades in English were unusually low; others rely on their own placement examinations; most use nationally administered tests of verbal aptitude. At about 10 percent of all schools which retain remedial English it is conducted as a "clinic" or tutorial service to which students are remanded by faculty members or to which they repair voluntarily. Where classes are held they are usually small (the enrollment mode is about eighteen students), and individual conferences are frequent.

Sixty-two percent of those schools which have remedial courses award no credit for them; 14 percent charge an extra fee. Some students who are consigned to this limbo therefore suffer a double penalty: they are given retarded (as opposed to advanced) placement, and they must pay for it. It is no wonder that their discontent equals that of their teachers.

Very few faculty members want to teach remedial English, and most departments hope to eliminate it as soon as possible. That so many have already done so can probably be attributed to (1) the "pressure of rising enrollments and . . . [the] national concern for raising educational standards at all levels" which Kitzhaber noted in 1963; (2) the rapid growth of the junior and community colleges, which now provide suitable instruction for some of the students English departments in four-year institutions would have placed in remedial courses; and (3) widespread skepticism about the efficacy of remedial programs. There is reason to doubt that any course of instruction, no matter how carefully designed and compassionately taught, can "remedy" the verbal faults committed by eighteen-year-old students who cannot cope with the regular freshman program; institutions like the University of Nevada report that less than 5 percent of those students who begin with remedial English ever graduate.

The NCTE report of 1960 estimated that about five million dollars was being spent annually on salaries of teachers of remedial English in four-year colleges and universities.[18]

---

17 p. 19.

18 The National Interest and the Teaching of English, p. 112.

Although the number of departments offering such programs has since diminished by more than half, salaries have increased by about a third from the $5,000 mean the NCTE study assumed, so the cost of remedial English may have remained almost constant. Certainly the cost is high and the rewards are small--too small to justify retaining courses almost wholly inappropriate to a college curriculum.

The Regular Freshman Program: Requirements and Exemptions. The tradition that all undergraduates should begin their college careers with a course in English remains well established. Of all four-year colleges and universities in the nation, 93.2 percent require freshmen to take at least one term of English, 77.8 percent require them to take two, and 10 percent (almost all of which have the trimester or quarter-type calendar) require three.[19] There are signs, however, which suggest that the assumption, so generally held throughout the first half of the century, that no college student should graduate without having had at least one course in English is now being questioned. A number of leading colleges and universities--Amherst, Yale, Northwestern, and the University of Colorado, for example--have recently abandoned their freshman English requirements (though not their English courses for freshmen), and at least one new institution, the University of California at Santa Cruz, has no freshman program to require. English departments on other campuses are asking their colleagues in other fields to review their motives for insisting that all students take English and to entertain the possibility that this requirement should be liberalized or eliminated. They point out that high school instruction in English is gradually improving, that students arrive at college today somewhat better trained in the arts of composition than those who enrolled as freshmen when the present requirements were established, and that the uses and conventions of English in the several disciplines are becoming so diverse that no one course in English can possibly meet all the needs of all departments.[20] Even at those institutions where the department's efforts to encourage a new and more realistic view of freshman requirements have met with success, however, they have not always resulted in greatly

---

19 These figures also reveal, of course, that only 15.4 percent of all institutions require only one term of freshman English and that the great majority require a full year.

20 English departments which have conducted such campaigns report that it is those schools and departments whose disciplines are farthest removed from English and who probably know least about freshman English--chemistry, engineering, and business administration, for example--which cling most tenaciously to the requirements. Here again the English department's willingness--or eagerness--to suffer diminution of empire may be thwarted or ignored by others in the academic community who feel that "all students should write correctly" and who naively assume that it is the English department's job to see that they do.

lightening its freshman load: at some of the institutions mentioned above which have eliminated their requirements, over 80 percent of all freshmen continue to elect courses in English.

A majority of four-year colleges and universities--58.8 percent--grant exemptions from their freshman English requirements to students of unusual ability.[21] Large, public institutions, which have more heterogeneous student bodies and a greater variety of freshman courses, are more likely than medium-sized or small to grant exemptions. The statistics are contained in Table 59.

TABLE 59

Institutions Granting Exemptions from Freshman English

	Percent
Small	52.1
Medium	63.2
Large	68.2
Public	64.1
Private	61.4
Sectarian	49.3

Exemptions are most commonly awarded for superior performance on nationally administered examinations: 30 percent of all institutions use such tests as the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test--Verbal and the Co-operative English Test to identify those students who will be excused from all or part of their freshman English programs. Another 22.1 percent use their own placement exams; 10.5 percent consider the student's high school record and his class standing; 7.5 percent have freshman classes for honors students, who are exempted from the regular program (and who may be selected by one or several of the previous methods); 22.8 percent use other means and evidence such as personal interviews, instructors' recommendations, and even samples of students' handwriting. At several schools students are exempted from a second freshman course if they perform well enough in the first; thus, freshmen at the University of Washington are permitted to skip a second quarter of English if they earn a B during the first quarter. (A third quarter course for those who failed to earn a B in the second has been dropped.)[22]

---

[21] "Advanced placement" will be discussed separately.

[22] Since this was written Washington's freshman requirements have been greatly liberalized. Now all students who have had four years of English in high school are exempted; thus, very few freshman are required to take English.

Specific criteria for exemption vary greatly, even among those institutions which use the same national examinations. At the University of Connecticut students are exempted from the basic course in composition if their SAT-V scores are 585 or above, at the University of North Carolina the cutoff point is 600, at the University of Oregon it is 650, and at the University of Virginia it is 675. A number of schools at which the mean SAT-V score for the freshman class is high (say, about 630) grant no exemptions at all; the list includes Stanford, Grinnell, Wheaton College (Mass.), and the University of California, Berkeley. Many policies on exemption are quite arbitrary, or if there is a reason for them it is merely that the department of English is attempting to control the size of its freshman classes by exempting a sufficient number of students. Other policies express a judicious estimate of the actual abilities signified by the scores and of the educational value the courses will have for students of different abilities. Some departments are willing to acknowledge that their basic courses will probably have little value for students of unusual ability, and they have no desire to prevent students from proceeding as rapidly as possible. Other departments are confident that their freshman courses are so rich and challenging that they are justified in requiring all students to take them. In general, departments in the latter group are found at institutions of high prestige, which can be highly selective in admissions. At such schools (many of which are small and private) freshman English has become, not a service course, but the best introduction to the world of letters the English department can contrive, an introduction they believe all students need.

Advanced Placement. In 1954 the College Entrance Examination Board inaugurated its Advanced Placement Program "to provide a practical way for schools and colleges to create and use common definitions of college-level courses which, when completed in secondary school, prepare students for advanced study at college."[23] It now provides course descriptions and conducts special examinations in eleven subject-matter areas, one of which is English. In each field the Board convenes a panel of specialists from the schools and colleges, who compose a general description of an ideal freshman course (or revise a previous description) to be taught to high school seniors of unusual ability and an examination designed to determine whether or not they have achieved college level competence in the subject. The courses are taught by members of the high school staff and are usually considered a choice teaching assignment. The students form a small elite[24] far superior in academic ability to the average American college freshman.

The course in English currently recommended by the Advanced Placement Examining Committee is of a familiar type: it combines

---

23 College Advanced Placement Policies, 1968 (Princeton: College Entrance Examination Board, 1968), p.3.

24 Of the 1.3 million students who entered American colleges in 1968, only 20,531 had taken the Advanced Placement Examination in English. Of those who took the exam, 29 percent received scores of 1 or 2 and were thereby discouraged from seeking advanced placement.

training in "practical criticism" or the close reading of literary texts with frequent writing assignments. Its purpose is "to teach the intelligent, mature student how to read works of literature and how to express himself about them."[25] It is not a course in composition or rhetoric as such, although it assumes that students will acquire proficiency in those arts as they compose their responses to literary works. The list of works suggested as appropriate (but not mandatory) reads much like a description of the typical fare of the standard freshman "Introduction to Literature": it runs from Hamlet to Death of a Salesman, from Pride and Prejudice to All the King's Men, and from Wyatt to Lowell. There are few surprises and very little contemporary literature.

The examination, which is administered nationally and which all students who wish to apply for advanced placement under the College Board's plan must take, lasts three hours. It consists of a short objective section (multiple-choice questions on a poem or passage of prose),[26] and three or four essay questions. In recent years the latter, which form the bulk of the examination, have included questions on an unidentified poem, questions on an unidentified prose passage, and a general question which is intended to enable students to demonstrate their understanding of two or three works they have read in the course. The objective test is scored electronically; answers to the essay questions are judged by a committee of readers, who award a composite grade based on the entire examination. Grades run from 1 to 5 and are explained as follows: "1--no recommendation, 2--possibly qualified [for advanced placement], 3--qualified, 4--well qualified, 5--extremely well qualified." In midsummer the student's answers to the essay questions (but not his record on the objective test)[27] are sent to the college he will enter in the fall. With the examination booklet is sent the score the College Board readers have given him (and, in many cases, a statement from his high school, describing the course he took, the grade he received, and the opinion of his teacher or principal). The college is free to make its own evaluation of the student's answers, of course, and it may or may not agree with the Board's judgment. (If there is disagreement, it may be because the college has not been shown the student's score on the objective test.) The college then decides whether or not the student will be granted advanced placement and on what terms.

---

25 1967-68 Advanced Placement Program in English (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1968), p. 73.

26 The objective test is included "to ensure reliability, breadth, and comparability with former years." It may also represent a concession to the psychometrists at the Educational Testing Service (which administers the examination), who continue to believe that responses to literature can be measured by such devices.

27 Officials of the College Board explain that they do not forward scores on the objective section because they have found that colleges misinterpret them and discriminate against candidates who do poorly on this relatively minor section of the exam.

At most colleges and universities the number of entering students who have taken the College Board course and examination and who sue for advanced placement is very small: the average is less than 1 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment. (Slight variations in this figure throughout the nation suggest that more students in the East participate in the Advanced Placement Program than in the West; see Table 60.)

TABLE 60

Students Who Apply for Advanced Placement

	Percent of total undergraduate enrollment
North Atlantic	2.7
South Central	2.2
Great Lakes and Plains	1.6
Southeast	1.2
West and Southwest	0.6

But these are excellent students who deserve special consideration, and for this reason alone most colleges try to formulate policies on advanced placement which will enable students to enter courses appropriate to their attainments. Any of several policies may be adopted. The College Board submits that "it is the sense of the Program that participating colleges will normally wish to grant advanced placement or credit, or both, to candidates who receive grades of 3 or higher and will wish to review the examinations of those students who receive a grade of 2."[28] It speaks of "truly participating institutions [which] . . . award credit . . . , other colleges [which] grant placement only, and still others, although they are increasingly hard to find, [which] give neither placement nor credit."[29] The choices which confront each college as it undertakes to define its policy on advanced placement are, then, as follows:

1. It may accept the College Board's evaluation and grant exemption and/or credit to those students who receive a grade of 3 ("qualified") or above.
2. It may accept the Board's evaluation but grant exemption for some higher (or lower) score.

---

[28] College . . . Policies, p. 3.

[29] A Guide to the Advanced Placement Program, 1968-69 (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1968), p. 23

3. It may take note of the Board's evaluation but act on its own judgment of the students' answers to the essay questions.

4. It may grant both exemption and course credit (that is, credit towards graduation).

5. It may grant exemption but not credit.

6. It may grant neither credit nor exemption. Colleges in this category do not participate in the College Board's program, either because they decline to do so or because none of their freshmen has yet applied for exemption or credit under that plan.

When asked to describe their policies on advanced placement, 29 percent of the departments in our sample reported that they followed the first procedure listed above, 12.2 percent that they followed the second, and 13.3 percent that they followed the third. Among those who participate in the Board's program just about half grant course credits which may be used to fulfill requirements for graduation (thus enabling the student to accelerate); the other half grant only exemption or have no fixed policy. Of all departments, however, 39.2 percent said they award neither exemption nor credit for college work done in high school under the College Board's plan. If this figure is reliable,[30] it means that over a third of all colleges and universities in the land do not acknowledge the Board's program or make no provision for rewarding students who have participated it it. And this would cast doubt on the Board's assertion that such institutions are "hard to find."

More important, perhaps, than how many colleges and universities of all kinds have which policies on advanced placement is which policies have been adopted by those relatively few institutions which regularly attract large numbers of advanced placement students. The College Board reports that in 1968 30.7 percent of all students who took its examination in English subsequently matriculated at forty-one institutions, each of which enrolled over ninety advanced placement candidates.[31] Analysis of the policies of these institutions reveals that 58.5 percent grant exemption for grades of 3 and above, 34 percent only grades of 4 and 5, 4.8 percent accept grades of 2 and above, and only one school in the group has no fixed policy on advanced placement. (No information on how many award credit is available.) Some of these institutions actively recruit advanced placement students, just as they recruit National Merit Scholars. Whether their policies are designed to lure superior applicants or are founded on faith in the advanced placement program, their practices, which less fortunate institutions are bound to emulate, must be gratifying to the College Board and to those who wholeheartedly endorse its program.

But not all college teachers of English do so. Many who are directly concerned with freshman programs have misgivings and complaints about the Advanced Placement Program. Their chief criticisms are:

---

[30] Their somewhat confused replies suggest that several respondents did not recognize the term "advanced placement" and reported their general policies on exemption instead.

[31] The University of Michigan led the list with 671 candidates. Harvard was next with 622. The University of Pennsylvania and Yale each had 338. Eight other schools had over 200, 26 more had over 100, and three had over 90.

1. That the Advanced Placement Examination in English is a very imperfect instrument. The objective section is of slight value, may even be invalid, as the Graduate Record Examination probably is (see page 175); fortunately this part counts for little. The essay questions do not test the student's ability to compose coherent expressions of well-deliberated thought and opinion, and it is this ability which many freshman courses--particularly those which are devoted to rhetoric and the study of non-literary prose--are designed to foster. Departments which offer such courses say they cannot use the Advanced Placement Examination as a means of identifying those students who should be exempted from their freshman programs. Naturally they also wish that more attention were paid to the arts of composition and rhetoric in the advanced placement course the College Board recommends.

Even those departments whose freshman courses closely resemble the Board's frequently express dissatisfaction with its examination. They complain of questions which seem to dictate responses and of questions which are so general as to invite rehashes of critical clichés. They say they find, as they read the examination booklets which are sent to them, that too often the students' answers to the essay questions offer no clear indication of whether or not they have acquired the reading habits the departments want their sophomores to have.

2. That sixteen-year-old students are not sufficiently mature to fully comprehend the works of literature read in advanced placement courses. "Sure, they can decipher The Waste Land or almost any other work you ask them to read," said one instructor, "but I doubt that they can understand the poem, because they haven't lived long enough to share experiences with the poet. Advanced placement and acceleration breed little monsters, premature sophisticates who can drop names but do little more." This charge overlooks the fact that if students do not read The Waste Land as seniors in high school they may very well be asked to read it nine months later in college, all the while they are happily assimilating films, novels, folk songs, and other products of the imagination which assume that they can understand matters just as profound as "fear in a handful of dust." There is no doubt, however, that it takes a skillful and imaginative teacher to render demanding works of literature--particularly works from the remote past--intelligible and amenable to adolescents. And this leads to the most serious criticism of the Advanced Placement Program, one which college teachers are reluctant to make but which they often express among themselves.

3. That too many high school teachers to whom the advanced placement course is consigned are incompetent to teach it. From students' answers to the essay questions--especially those which ask them to comment on works they have read under instruction--college authorities can only infer that the level of discussion in many high school advanced placement courses is lamentably low. Too often students offer mere synopsis for critical analysis (despite specific injunctions on the examination), too often their interpretations are stale, superficial, and over-simple. To read a set of replies to almost any one of the general questions is to pass through yards of standard prose about "Macbeth as a tragic figure" and "Willy Loman as a symbol of our times"; there is little evidence of original thought or personal insight. The suspicion

arises that many advanced placement students have been supplied "official" readings of the suggested works by teachers who received them from somewhere else. That the teachers are capable of reading the works as the colleges expect their students to read them--that is, with attention to verbal texture, structure, and complexities of meaning--sometimes seems doubtful.

A few colleges and universities have not been content merely to criticize the Advanced Placement Program and the teachers who conduct it in the high schools but have sought to improve it to the benefit of their own undergraduate programs. Thus the English department at the University of Oregon has worked, with the support of the Ford Foundation, to encourage high schools in its state to institute advanced placement courses and has collaborated with teachers in the schools to insure that those courses meet college standards. Members of the department report that this effort has already brought better trained students to their campus. The promise of the Advanced Placement Program is that it affords opportunities of this kind to weld the seam between school and college and to offer good students rich courses at a time when they are best prepared to learn.

The Varieties of Freshman English. In two respects the freshman courses at Carleton College, the University of Washington, and Dillard University, to name three disparate schools, are alike: at all these institutions--and most others--classes are small and students are required to write frequent papers. In almost every other respect they differ. The "enormous variety" which Kitzhaber found when he surveyed freshman English in 1961 is still apparent, and it does not seem that any single concept of the course or any one policy on freshman English will soon prevail. The ideal program which teachers and administrators (and textbook publishers) have sought for fifty years has not yet emerged, and the debate over freshman English continues much as before. When that debate is conducted by men who have pondered the ultimate implications of their arguments, however, it leads to matters fundamental to the concerns of all English departments; just as the freshman course is basic, so are the problems it raises. To rehearse the debate and to review the varieties of freshman English now offered is therefore to anatomize much of the profession's most significant thought and practice.

About one matter there seems to be little argument: it is generally agreed that, whatever is taught or done in freshman English, the course should provide abundant opportunities for discussion and for direct communication between the student and his teacher. Despite steadily increasing enrollments most colleges and universities have managed to keep their freshman English classes small: the most common size is about twenty-five students. Some have incorporated one or even two lecture meetings a week, but almost all retain at least one class in which students are encouraged to share their thoughts with their teachers and their fellow students. At many large universities the English class may offer the freshman his only opportunity to participate in the free exchange of ideas and to confer with a professional intellectual. This may be the best reason for limiting the size of freshman English classes and, indeed, the chief justification of freshman English itself. Dudley Bailey, chairman of English at the University of Nebraska, writes:

> I have never heard an argument for increasing the [teaching] load at the freshman level--except that it is a way of reducing professorial loads. The usual arguments against it are those about the importance of composition and the paper load; I find these arguments a lot of malarkey, and I think many other chairmen do also. But I should oppose increase in the size of freshman classes on other grounds: it is probably wrong to place the heaviest teaching load on the youngest staff, however we may rationalize doing so with talk of limber bones and all that; and it is certainly wrong to place beginning students in the largest classes. The central problem of the modern university of some size is giving to the incoming student the sense that he is joining an intellectual community, of a size that he can understand and deal with. I find it rather droll to talk to anybody about an intellectual community of 20,000 or 40,000; none of us really adjusts to a community a tenth that size. It seems to me ridiculous to talk of such a community to the freshman student; I am not surprised that in most cases the student identifies with a community which can hardly be called an intellectual one--not everybody associated with a large university is as stupid as the faculty. We ought to have sense enough to realize that if the student is ever to cope with the modern megalo-versity, he must somewhere catch hold of it; and I doubt that he will succeed unless we can start him off in small and hopefully comfortable groups. [32]

This sensible argument implies that freshman English may serve, better than any other course taken during the first year in college, as something students may "catch hold of" and as an introduction to the intellectual life. Despite the variety, the confusion, and the imperfections of freshman English as it is taught today, it frequently does just that. "Students often testify, as they look back, that their freshman English course first brought their minds to life. . . . Because freshman English classes are still relatively small in most institutions, the instructor is often able to provide individual help for the student; he often becomes a counselor as well as a teacher, just because he is less remote than the lecturer in the large introductory courses. Often students even learn to write better." [33]

---

[32] "Faculty Teaching Loads: The State University," Bulletin of the Association of Departments of English, February 1968, p. 12.

[33] Robert M. Gorrell, "Freshman Composition," The College Teaching of English, edited by John C. Gerber (New York, 1965), p. 92.

If they do so, it may be because they have never before been asked to write so much under such close supervision. Of all departments 40.2 percent require freshmen to write eleven to fifteen papers a term, or about a theme a week; another 23.6 percent require nine or ten. Only 16.5 percent require fewer than seven papers a term (and only 3.5 percent more than fifteen). A long paper (usually, but not always, a "research" paper) is assigned by 43.3 percent. Most freshmen, then, must write about 5,000 words for their English teachers during their first term at college. (At many institutions fewer papers are required during the second term.)[34] The 125 million words (give or take a few million) they produce each year are invited—indeed, demanded--by teachers who can take little joy in reading most of them but who can see no way to work with students on their use of language other than by asking them to use it. Very few teachers now delude themselves that they can improve their students' ability to write simply by requiring them to write more often,[35] but most find that to accomplish the purposes of the courses they have conceived they must confront students with a variety of writing tasks. In short, the good teacher of freshman English never asks for sheer quantity of prose, but he often finds himself reading quantities of themes because he believes the aims of his course demand them.

It is when they turn to defining those aims and to deciding what freshman English is all about that those who teach it begin to diverge. The principal question which divides them is whether their freshman courses should be conceived as service courses, designed to provide general training in verbal skills, or as "English" courses, designed to prepare students for further work in that field. About half the departments in the nation--48.9 percent, to be exact--still believe that freshman English should serve the community as a whole by instructing students in techniques

---

[34] The number of papers assigned in freshman English varies only slightly with the size, type, and geographical location of the institution. Small colleges tend to require a few more than large, private and sectarian a few more than public, and schools in the South a few less than those in the rest of the nation. But the differences are almost negligible.

[35] The few experiments which have tested the assumption that a student's writing improves in direct proportion to the number of papers he writes have not proved that it does. The report on the latest of these experiments concludes that "a statistical analysis of . . . test essay scores . . . does not support the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in college freshman English courses . . . [but that] the personal observations of instructors, assistants, and students support the hypothesis." In other words, teachers may <u>think</u> that frequent writing is beneficial, but they cannot prove it. See Melvin H. Wolf, <u>Effect of Writing Frequency upon Proficiency in a College Freshman English Course; Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, Project No. 2846</u> (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1966).

of composition they may use whenever they are called upon to write. Of the remaining half a few (6.9 percent) have abandoned this concept entirely and now see their freshman courses solely as introductions to the study of English at the college level. The rest try to pursue both goals, either simultaneously or in separate terms. In other words, English departments in the United States are about evenly divided between those which offer freshman utilitarian training and those which offer them something more. The distinction is roughly, but not exactly, that which Kitzhaber made between the "practical" view of freshman English, according to which "the course exists to provide immediate therapy for students whose academic future is clouded by their inability to manage the written form of English," and the "liberal" view, which "assumes that the primary purpose of the course is to focus the student's attention on fundamental principles of clear thinking and the clear and effective expression of that thinking."[36] Many teachers and departments, inspired by a new sense of the integrity of their discipline, would now expand Kitzhaber's "liberal" view, enlarging it to include some reference to literary values and the humanizing effect of literary studies. With one chairman they would declare their "growing unwillingness to exist as a 'service department' for the rest of the university" and assert their desire "to devote [their] interests and utilize [their] specializations in those areas for which [the department] exists, viz., literary art and humanistic thought."[37] These departments see theirs as a choice not between "therapy" and a course in "clear thinking" but between exercising and educating, between coaching students for future occasions which may demand the use of language and confronting them with present occasions which require the use of all their mental faculties.

Related to this distinction between rival concepts of freshman English and its purpose is a radical distinction between theories of composition and how it should be taught. "When someone teaches composition," Kitzhaber justly observes, "he is trying to cultivate in the student a bafflingly complex intellectual skill."[38] Just what is involved in the practice of that skill no one really knows. A 1963 summary, "The State of Knowledge about Composition," concludes with a section entitled "Unexplored Territory," which lists some twenty-four questions which have yet to be answered; the last of these is the simple but all-embracing query, "Of what does skill in writing really consist?"[39]

---

36 Themes, Theories, and Therapy, pp. 2,3.

37 Harold P. Simonson, University of Puget Sound, in response to questionnaire.

38 P. 89.

39 Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign, 1963), p. 53.

Unable to define the skill they would impart, much less to engender it at will, teachers of composition fashion courses which they hope, more or less blindly, will encourage the writing habits they prefer. In doing so they commit themselves, wittingly or otherwise, to certain unprovable assumptions about the nature of the writing process. Louis Milic has helped them define those assumptions and their pedagogical consequences by identifying, with some oversimplification, the theories of style available to teachers of composition.

> There are only three real theories of style, though there has been much embroidery on the basic fabric. The most familiar is the theory of ornate form, or rhetorical dualism. From the classical rhetoricians who originated it to the rhetoricians of the moment who are still using it, this dualism view has always implied that ideas exist wordlessly and can be dressed in a variety of outfits. . . . A second theory, the individualist or psychological monism, which finds its most common expression in the aphorism that the style is the man . . . means that a writer cannot help writing the way he does, for that is the dynamic expression of his personality. . . . The most modern theory of style, Crocean aesthetic monism, is an organic view which denies the possibility of any separation between content and form . . . for the work of art (the composition) is a unified whole, with no seam between meaning and style.[40]

The teacher who makes the first of these assumptions and who takes a dualistic view of writing or style will devote most of his freshman course to apprising his students of the various expressive means they may command, of the many ways their thoughts may be dressed. That is, he will teach composition or rhetoric as such, with relatively little concern for subject matter or what is expressed. No "particular attention [need] be paid to the substance of the writing," Milic explains, "for the [dualistic] theory explicitly denies any link between substance and form except for logic."[41] Teachers who subscribe to this theory of style (which he himself endorses) should be "honestly and unashamedly concerned with form and not with content," if only because their aim is to train their students to use formal devices which will serve on many different occasions to express many different contents.[42] Courses in composition which are based on this set of assumptions or which imply this concept of style usually consist of readings in nonliterary expository prose, discussion of verbal patterns and rhetorical strategies, and a sequence of writing assignments. This is the most common course in composition: 47.5 percent of all departments begin their freshman programs with a term of straight composition and rhetoric; 23 percent devote the whole year to those subjects and to

---

40 "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition," College Composition and Communication, 16 (1965), 142.

41 P. 143.

42 P. 145.

them alone. To a large extent these are the departments which see their freshman courses as service courses or as general training in verbal skills, not as preparation for further work in English. If one assumes that students can be prepared to cope with almost any writing task, one must assume that form can be divorced from and taught independently of content.

Those who subscribe to one or another version of Milic's second theory (or of his third, which may be seen as an extension of the second) believe that in order to improve a student's writing one must improve his mind and give him something to say. Although they may not promise that their courses will lead to "spiritual self-improvement" (as Milic says they should if they are to meet all the demands of the "theory of psychological monism"), they are persuaded that no one can write well unless he has something to write about, and they are impressed by the fact that students' prose does improve when they are writing about something which interests them. Denys Thompson, editor of the British journal for teachers, The Use of English, expresses their conviction succinctly when he writes:

> Most of us would agree that composition can be taught up to a point, that there is a need for orderly arrangement, and so on; but of late the trend has been to let training in composition take second place to ensuring that pupils have something to write about that engages them and sets their pens going. Many teachers feel that if there is an individual response to lively material, the rest will follow.[43]

The "fresh and lively material" to which most teachers of this persuasion turn is literature. They do so not only because they are experts in literature[44] but also because, as one chairman has written, "Imaginative literature has demonstrated, to our satisfaction at least, that it is doubly qualified as a carrier of value and a stimulus of writing."[45] Of all the materials available to them literature is best suited, they believe, to encourage sensitivity, compassion, an awareness of irony and paradox, and other virtues which may be supposed to characterize

---

43 "Aims and Purposes of Teaching English in Britain," A Common Purpose, edited by James R. Squire (Champaign, 1966), p. 9.

44 And may not be experts in composition as such. It is an ironic fact that those who find themselves teaching freshman English were among those who were most likely to have been exempted from that course when they themselves were freshmen.

45 Edgar Smith Rose, "English 11-12: Reading and Writing on Human Values: The What and Why of Freshman English at Haverford College," Haverford Horizons, 5 (Spring 1964), 5-6.

the humanistically educated man. Furthermore, literature is portable, it comes in books which men may point to as they explore their common experiences, and the books elicit--or should elicit--complex responses which can be fully articulated only by the most careful and precise use of language. For these and other reasons 11.3 percent of all departments now devote the first term of freshman English exclusively to reading literature and to writing about it; 24.8 percent devote the second term to those activities; 38 percent combine literature with composition in the first term; and the same number (but not necessarily the same departments) do so in the second term.

These, then, are the polar opposites or theoretical extremes among the several types of freshman courses being offered today: the course in composition as such, which proposes to teach students to fashion conventional verbal wholes, and the course in uses of the mind, which attempts to improve writing by enlarging understanding--usually of experience as represented in literature. In theory the two are incompatible. Milic, who decries the fact that "no consistent theory of style seems to underlie the several efforts to teach composition," argues "that eclecticism will not really work and that a choice among these theories must be made by the teacher of composition."[46] In actual practice few instructors or departments make such a choice, and many versions and combinations of the two basically antithetical courses are found. After all, papers for the course in composition must be about something, and papers for the course in literature must be read as compositions. Many teachers believe that it is not only impractical but wrong to make an either/or choice between the two courses, to deny themselves resources and opportunities to educate merely to achieve theoretical consistency. Anxious to give their courses substance as well as to heighten their students' sensitivity to language and form, they look for some subject matter or study which will tax the mind while it contributes to an understanding of the medium and how it may be manipulated. During recent years two subjects which promise to meet these specifications have attracted some teachers of freshmen English.

1. Linguistics. Early in the sixties it occurred to a number of teachers who had acquired some understanding of modern linguistics that the analysis of language and usage might make an ideal activity for freshman English. They themselves were intrigued by the discoveries linguists had made, and some of them thought they saw in the freshman course devoted to the study of language a way to obviate the agonizing choice between form and content.

> The powerful trend to the study of linguistics and substantive matters in composition courses of late years may find its source in the unconscious adoption of [the] unitary [i.e., Crocean] view. If we cannot teach rhetoric, we must still teach something, but since mis-

---

[46] Pp. 142, 143.

cellaneous social and topical subjects have produced no improvement, perhaps the final recourse to the subject matter of language itself will succeed. Thus the proponents of the linguistic readers have in a way solved the Crocean paradox. Substance cannot be separated from form, but if the substance is the form we can have the best of both worlds.47

The brand of linguistics these teachers offered freshmen was, of course, very dilute: it consisted mostly of popularized essays about linguistics rather than actual demonstrations of linguistic analysis. Attempts were made to disabuse students of fallacious notions of "correctness" and to give them a glimpse of the complexities of modern grammars. No one who advocated these courses claimed that they would inevitably produce better prose. "My personal opinion," wrote Paul Roberts, "is that linguistic science has no cure for the problems of the composition class, so long as that class is viewed as principally a means of teaching people to write better. . . . It is not to be expected that study of the grammar, no matter how good a grammar it is or how carefully it is taught, will effect enormous improvement in writing. Probably the improvement will be small and hard to demonstrate and for the large number of students who lack the motivation or the capacity to learn to write, it will be non-existent."48 It was their business to describe, not to prescribe, the linguists continued to insist, and therefore they could hardly be expected to give practical advice to young writers.

Two difficulties immediately beset the freshman course devoted to linguistic materials: first, those materials proved much less interesting to freshmen than to their teachers, and second, the number of teachers who were competent to speak with authority about the history and structure of the language was small. Freshmen could be titillated by such facts--now become undergraduate clichés--as the number of Eskimo words for snow, but more urgent concerns and appetites distracted them from the systematic study of language as such. To make that study exciting and pertinent, to devise assignments which would elicit good prose from his students, the teacher had to know more than he and his students could learn from the elementary essays in their reader. Not many did, and linguistics was therefore misrepresented and undersold. "If linguistics has not kept its promises," Francis Lee Utley argued, "it is through no fault of its own, but because there are too few freshman teachers who are properly taught the orderly truths about their language."49 Those "orderly truths" are often taught to graduate students well after they have begun to teach freshmen, and they have never been taught to many teachers who left graduate school prior to, say, 1955. It is no wonder, then,

---

47 Milic, p. 144.

48 "Linguistics and the Teaching of Composition," English Journal, 52 (May 1963), 333, 335.

49 "The Boundaries of Language and Rhetoric: The English Curriculum," College Composition and Communication, 19 (May 1968), 127.

that few departments have been satisfied for very long with the freshman course in linguistics and that only 4.8 percent of them now devote a whole term of their freshman program to that study.

2. Rhetoric. John Gerber has derived the sudden return to rhetoric as fit matter for the freshman course from the brief vogue for courses in "communications skills" which occurred in the late forties and early fifties.

> The revival of interest in rhetoric began, really, in our composition classes in the late 1940's with the great emphasis at the time on communication skills. Designed primarily for returning veterans and largely pragmatic in purpose, most of the communication skills courses did not last long, at least at the college level, but in their short life they broke up the notion of the successful composition as a static discourse needing only unity, coherence, and emphasis for its success. Those teaching communication skills courses insisted that a written discourse must communicate something to someone. As Wendell Johnson used to say, "You don't write writing." By the late 1950's the interest in communication had broadened into a concern for rhetoric, something that our colleagues in speech had never lost. With this development came a sharper conviction that the successful composition is one that influences the thought and conduct of the reader. Accordingly the emphasis in composition classes began to shift from logic to psychology, from form to result, from a static concept of discourse to a dynamic one. The split between the old and the new concepts came dramatically when those preparing the composition syllabus for the CEEB Summer Institutes met in Ann Arbor in the summer of 1961. Ten of those planning to direct composition courses clung to the notion of composition as logic, ten took the newer--or older--notion of composition as psychology. In subsequent conferences and in the newer textbooks, however, those espousing the dynamics of rhetoric are clearly winning out.[50]

It was natural that English teachers should tire of the tidy but vapid compositions freshmen learn to write when all they are taught is how to play "the essay game." The great attraction of rhetoric (which has been defined as "an art governing the choice of strategies that a speaker or writer must make in order to communicate most effectively with an audience")[51] is that it promises to be both humanistic and systematic. That is, it is concerned with humans in the act of deliberation, with choices they must make and strategies they may follow as they undertake the urgent business of communicating with their fellow human beings. But it also proposes to reduce all this to a finite body of precepts, to a system which may be taught. Thus it seems admirably well suited to the needs of the times, being at once "dynamic" and orderly, "dramatistic" (to use Kenneth Burke's term) and

---

[50] "Literature--Our Untamable Discipline," College English, 28 (1967), 356.

[51] Edward P. J. Corbett, "What Is Being Revived?" College Composition and Communication, 18 (1967), 166. This article provides an excellent summary of the revival of rhetoric in recent years.

pragmatic. No longer would teachers of composition simply hand their students a pattern of the coherent essay; instead they would investigate with them the options available to men as they try to persuade others to think and see as they do. It was hoped that these options could be codified in a comprehensive rhetorical theory and that this in turn would lead to more effective and more honest rhetorical practice.

The years which have elapsed since the sudden vogue for rhetoric began in 1962 have not seen the fulfillment of that hope. So far there has been much talk about a "new rhetoric," and a few promising experiments in fashioning one from the insights of generative grammar and tagmemic theory have been described. But no one has yet produced that unified theory or "organon" leaders of the movement have envisioned, and the total influence on classroom teaching has probably been both superficial and slight. One obstacle which confronts the partisans of rhetoric is a problem familiar to most teachers of language and its uses: how to translate theory, which describes and explains, into instruction, which offers practical advice. Robert Gorrell, who has been active in the campaign to revitalize rhetoric, candidly acknowledges this problem:

> A theory of rhetoric attempts to describe accurately and consistently and fully what happens; practical rhetoric is concerned with choices. The teacher of writing is concerned with the effects of different grammatical alternatives, so that he can offer advice about which choices to make for different circumstances. In other words, rhetoric considered as practical advice about writing and speaking grows from comprehensive rhetorical theory, but it is not just a statement of theory. The problem is that when the theory gets put in practical terms, when it becomes norms or precepts, it risks being useless, being only partly applicable, and being dogmatic. . . . When the theory becomes concrete its weaknesses show.[52]

Unless one assumes that greater understanding inevitably leads to better practice--a proposition very difficult to defend--one cannot be certain that "the new rhetoric," whenever it may appear, will necessarily result in better courses in composition and better writing by freshmen. Indeed, those who advocate a return to rhetoric seem to be headed for the same embarrassment which overtook the partisans of linguistics: the more comprehensive their theory and the more subtle and precise their analyses, the less likely it is that they will be able to help the freshman who confronts the blank page. To describe all the rhetorical options available to him might be to render him mute; to prescribe one option over another would be to violate their theory. A major task

---

[52] "Very Like a Whale--A Report on Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, 16 (October 1965), 141.

for the new rhetoricians will be to design a pedagogy which will accommodate their theoretical deliberations to the practical exigencies of the classroom. That task they have barely begun to tackle.

Freshman Textbooks. In numbers of copies sold, freshman English is the largest single market for college textbooks: the million or more students who enroll in freshman English courses each year spend well over ten million dollars on textbooks during the first term alone. To capture this market or a sizeable portion of it is the dream of many a publisher (and many an English teacher). The market is difficult to comprehend, much less to capture, however, not because freshman English is a dynamic, ever-changing institution but because so many texts of a few perennial types are published and so many of them are so much alike. Teachers may choose from among some twenty handbooks of grammar, for example, and none is sufficiently distinguished to command universal adoption. Table 61 shows how many departments use texts of each of the standard types in their freshman courses. (Figures are percentages of all departments; many use texts of more than one type.) [53]

TABLE 61

Freshman Texts Used

Handbooks	73.1
Anthologies of literature	55.6
Anthologies of essays	51.5
Separate literary works	48.1
Rhetorics	45.1
Casebooks	19.4
Dictionaries	12.7
Workbooks	3.7
Programmed grammars	2.2
Glossaries of literary terms	1.9
Other*	12.3

*includes such types as guides to research, speech texts, and style sheets.

In addition to the handbook (which many teachers now require only because they devote little or no class time to the matters it is supposed to explain), the most popular texts are still the fat anthologies, either of literary works or of "expository" prose. It is notable, however, that

53 These figures do not vary greatly with the size, type, or geographical location of the school. Handbooks are somewhat more popular in small schools than in large, in public schools than in private; rhetorics do not sell as well in the West and Southwest as in the Great Lakes and Plains; a higher percentage of public schools than private or sectarian require all students to buy dictionaries. But the variations are not large enough to indicate significant differences in the courses taught.

almost half the departments now prefer to buy at least some of their literature in separate editions of single works rather than in large packages of preselected (and, to some extent, predigested) materials. Among those departments which are most actively experimenting with means to improve their freshman courses the trend seems to be away from the mass adoption of omnibus anthologies and towards the varied use of individual texts selected by individual teachers. This may mean, in turn, that most teachers are devoting more effort and more imagination to devising their own courses for freshmen rather than slavishly accepting the suggestions of others. If this is true, the trend towards smaller texts (which has been greatly encouraged by the proliferation of the paperback book) may indicate a welcome trend towards diversification and experimentation in freshman English.

Innovations in Freshman English

Every year departments in every part of the nation ask themselves, often in tones approaching despair, "What should we do about freshman English?" If this one course or program gives them more cause for concern than any other, it is probably because:

1. Having been acquired almost by accident, freshman English has remained an anomaly in the department's curriculum, part of it yet not part of it, demanding over a third of the department's energies yet slighted by its most eminent members, essential to the department's enterprise yet overlooked in many of its deliberations;

2. Freshman English proposes to improve students' ability to write, but no one is sure just how that can be done;

3. Unlike most other courses, freshman English has no necessary substance: there is no body of materials which must be studied to achieve its purposes, no single teaching method which must be practiced. Many things are possible, and often the teacher cannot predict which will be most appropriate and effective. Thus he suffers a true embarrassment of riches: because there is so much he may legitimately discuss with his students--from the nature of language to "the human condition"--he is seldom satisfied that the course he has designed is the best he might conceive and conduct. That most departments are dissatisfied with their courses for freshmen is indicated by the fact that over 60 percent of them have recently made changes in their programs: 10.9 percent have reduced the amount of English freshmen are required to take; 10.2 percent have reduced the amount of time devoted to grammar and the mechanics of language in their freshman courses; 8.4 percent have converted their courses in composition to courses in literature; 5.8 percent have added honors courses or special sections for students of high competence; 4.7 percent have decreed that part of their programs will be taken in the students' junior or senior years; 3.6 percent have arranged to provide more individual instruction in writing;

3.3 percent have incorporated large lecture meetings which all students attend; 3.3 percent have increased the amount of grammar being taught; and 29.8 percent have made other changes, ranging from instituting interdisciplinary courses to employing audiovisual aids, from discontinuing the research paper to teaching by programmed texts. Many of these innovations are minor or they have been tried and abandoned elsewhere, but a few departments have introduced wholly new programs or procedures which others may soon want to emulate or imitate. Some of the most interesting and promising major innovations to appear within recent years or decades are as follows:

Earlham's Freshman Humanities Course. Students in this course (which is taught by the English department alone) read a book a week and write a paper on each. The fare is varied, and teachers have no fear of venturing well outside their fields: a recent reading list included Jefferson's Political Writings, Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, McLuhan's The Gutenberg Galaxy, and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Texts are chosen in the hope they will stimulate individual, original thought; no attempt is made to achieve a grand synthesis or integrated plan of studies. Writing assignments are general or "open," and the instructor tries to avoid dictating or directing class discussions. Classes (limited to about twenty students) meet three times a week to discuss the readings. In addition, students meet once a week in groups of four to six (with their instructors) to criticize each other's papers. Techniques of composition are discussed in these tutorial sessions.[54] Obviously Earlham's program makes great demands on those who teach it, but after ten years all members of the department remain enthusiastic about the course; none regards it as a chore.

English 11 at Amherst. For over twenty years Theodore Baird of Amherst College, one of the few originals in his profession, directed a unique course for freshmen which has had a profound influence on those who have taught it and those who have taken it.[55] The course is difficult to describe, its "philosophy" difficult to define, in part because both are expressions of Professor Baird's singular and profoundly inquisitive mind. No textbooks are used. Classes meet three times a week, and students write a paper for every class. They write in response to a carefully planned series of fresh and ingenious assignments which ask them to examine the way they act in language. As William Coles, Jr., of Case Institute, who worked with Baird for several years, explains, the subject of the course "is writing, writing conceived of not as a way of saying something but as something being said, as an action, an extension of being at a moment in time."[56] A typical initial assignment (this one by Professor Coles)

---

[54] This feature of Earlham's program originated at Haverford and has now been adopted by the University of Chicago, to which Wayne Booth moved after teaching first at Haverford and then at Earlham.

[55] Professor Baird retired in 1969. His course is no longer required at Amherst.

[56] "The Teaching of Writing as Writing," College English, 29 (1967), 111.

asks the students "what [they] mean when [they] use the terms professional and amateur." Subsequent assignments--many of which seem merely cryptic when they are removed from the context of the course--prompt the students to recall occasions when they used the terms and to define "where they stood" and what they were doing as they used them. Papers are mimeographed and discussed in class. By posing such radical questions as "Where and how with this problem do you locate yourself? To what extent and in what ways is that self definable in language? What is this self on the basis of the language shaping it? What has it got to do with you?" the instructor hopes to develop in the student a "heightened self-consciousness of his identity as a reflex of the languages he commands."[57] Some teachers have complained that the course makes students so self-conscious in their use of language that they are paralyzed or reduced to inarticulateness; Professor Baird would probably reply that a good course in writing should make it more difficult to write. Others have said that his course teaches students only to play a special game, for which it is necessary to learn to ask a special kind of question. No one would deny, however, that the questions posed in English 11 at Amherst are the very best kind: they admit of no final answers, serve only to impel a continuing activity, the activity of using the whole of one's mind as one observes oneself in the act of using language.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Three miles away, at the other end of the town of Amherst, Walker Gibson (who once taught with Baird) has recently inaugurated a new course for the thousands of freshmen who enter the University of Massachusetts each year. It combines elements of conventional rhetoric with some of Baird's emphasis on self-scrutiny. "Of all student writing [it asks] three essential questions. Who are you as you make this assertion (and is this the person you want to be)? To whom are you talking (how does this awareness of audience affect your expression)? What is your evidence as you present your position or argument?"[58] The student writes about "his own experience, especially his current university experience, his current exposure to new ways of looking." He is encouraged to experiment with a number of "voices" and to watch what happens as he shifts from one voice to another. The problem of how to teach rhetoric and value is met head-on:

> In assessing appropriate voices proffered by our students, we will be especially suspicious of authoritarian and over-simple kinds of statements that assume a one-for-one identity between word and thing. That is, we will be attacking the familiar habit of reification--that confusion of language and reality which forgets that words are man-made and inherently

---

57 Pp. 113, 115.

58 From a mimeographed manifesto, entitled, with appropriate mock-stuffiness, "A Statement of High Principles."

abstract. The voices we hope to encourage, therefore, will be modest and self-aware, ready for change, responsive to opposing views of the question at hand.

If it works as Gibson and his staff hope it will, their course should encourage both critical awareness and honesty, twin goals of any good freshman program.

The "Voice Project" at Stanford. Late in the summer of 1965 a group of teachers in the humanities met at Tufts University determined "to initiate new experiments in undergraduate instruction." Among the members of the "Working Committee on English" were Father Walter Ong, S.J., of Saint Louis University; Benjamin DeMott of Amherst; Albert Guerard of Stanford; Charles Muscatine of Berkeley; and John Hawkes, a novelist who teaches at Brown. After hearing DeMott denounce "virtually everything in literature teaching today" as "an evasion,"[59] the group set about to fashion a freshman course which would inject "a new kind of life in college teaching" and would represent a "radical innovation in education." They found the germ of such a course in a concept Father Ong had presented, somewhat cloudily, in his book The Barbarian Within. "In an acceptable sense," he had written, "silent writing is a form of speaking, as silent reading is a form of hearing."

> Speaking and hearing are not simple operations. Each exhibits a dialectical structure which mirrors the mysterious depths of man's psyche. As he composes his thoughts in words, a speaker or writer hears these words echoing within himself and thereby follows his own thought, as though he were another person. Conversely, a hearer or reader repeats within himself the words he hears and thereby understands them, as though he himself were two individuals. . . . The speaker listens while the hearer speaks.[60]

Evidently it occurred to those who attended the Tufts conference that they could design a course for freshmen which would encourage them to listen to their own "voices" so that they might apprehend the total personality they expressed when they used words. Whereas Walker Gibson's course at the University of Massachusetts asks students to "watch themselves" as they write, the Voice Project asked them to "listen." As it happened Albert Guerard was then in charge of freshman English at Stanford, and during the 1966-1967 academic year that university served as host to a pilot program, directed by John Hawkes and funded by the Office of Education, using "voice as a focus of multiform innovation," as Father Ong put it. One hundred of Stanford's 1,300 freshmen were selected to participate in the program, which also extended to the local secondary schools (Stanford students conducted "voice" experiments in elementary and high school classes) and later included a "College Readiness Program" for Negro students. The regular teaching staff

---

59 "Last Try," Voice Project: An Experiment in Teaching Writing to College Freshmen (Washington, D. C.: Office of Education, 1967), p. 11.

60 (New York, 1962), pp. 51 ff.

was supplemented at times by visiting writers and experts, among them John Hersey, Jerome Bruner, and Herbert Kohl.

A good deal of what was done in class amounted to reifying Father Ong's metaphor. Students listened to recordings of their actual voices and matched what they heard with their prose on the page. They listened to other voices--Truman Capote's and that of a seven-year-old child named John Wakabayashi, for example--and they continually moved back and forth from aural to printed language, with frequent excursions into other interesting matters suggested by their explorations of the complex process of translating what is heard into what is read. Their experiment did not produce The New Freshman Course, but it struck some good blows against that "voiceless," "mechanical" prose which most courses for freshmen, with their handbooks and their conventional assignments, seem designed to produce.

The Interdisciplinary Program at Lawrence. Lawrence University has had no freshman English since 1945. Instead, it offers its entering students an interdisciplinary (or multidisciplinary) program it calls "Freshman Studies." The description of this collaborative enterprise it distributes to its freshmen begins by "defining Freshman Studies in terms of what it is not."

> It is not an English class although reading and writing are important features of it. It is not a survey of Western thought although most of the books read in the course deal with important ideas of Western culture. It is not a "great books" course although the books studied are great and important. Quite simply, Freshman Studies was designed to awaken students intellectually as early as possible. It also seeks to make them aware of the kind of education Lawrence tries to offer in all its departments and in its total program.

Students are required to take two trimester terms of Freshman Studies. Classes are small and meet three times a week for seventy-minute periods. Six times each term all classes meet together for a common lecture. The program is staffed by faculty members from almost all departments at Lawrence (the English department usually contributes two or three members), and "in this course all the teachers teach all the books, not merely those from their field of specialty."

The program they present to the freshmen is a kind of sampler of the principal disciplines in which the university offers instruction. It may begin one year with a three-week unit devoted to Faulkner's Light in August, move on to the study of a text on genetics, and then proceed to a discussion of a problem in sociology. No attempt is made to relate the several disciplines, although the faculty naturally hopes that students will perceive interconnections among the works and topics they encounter

in the course.[61] About five papers are required each term, and students are encouraged to find their own topics because their teachers "believe that students learn to write well when they have something they very much want to say." They also believe "that the training in correct and effective writing is the responsibility of the whole faculty and not of the English staff alone." The student is therefore advised "not to be concerned at learning that his themes may be graded by teachers outside the English Department."

Just as they are delighted to share the burden of reading freshman themes with their colleagues in other departments, so the members of Lawrence's English department who approve of the Freshman Studies Program welcome the opportunities it affords to explore disciplines other than their own. "It keeps you alive and makes you a better teacher of English," some of them say. Others disagree. They complain that teaching Freshman Studies makes inordinate demands on faculty members, who must acquire at least a superficial knowledge of subjects far outside their field of specialization. "Instead of boning up on genetics," one of them argued, "I ought to be studying American literature, which is what I teach best." These critics also charge that no one is fully competent to teach the course and that requiring all faculty members who participate to teach all the works read makes for a degree of amateurism which is unfair to the students. "They didn't pay their tuition to talk about Light in August with a sociologist," one of them said. To this argument the official defense of the program replies, "The student should understand that each of his teachers is a specialist in some one field but is interested, as an educated man or woman, in other fields. He will learn that liberally educated people are able to read with intelligence and pleasure significant books on various subjects without, of course, pretending to be specialists in them. Most especially, he should realize that his teachers, professed believers in the liberal arts, are honestly making proof of their principles." How well those principles are proved obviously depends on the versatility and the dedication of the individual teacher.

Freshman Seminars. How can the department of English enrich its freshman courses, give them intellectual substance so that they will not duplicate high school work and will confront students with urgent occasions for using language? Unknown to each other, two colleges at opposite ends of the country--Dartmouth and Mills--have come up with the same answer to that question. Both now require all first-year students to enroll for one term in what are called, on both campuses, "freshman seminars." These are frankly specialized courses, in which a limited topic or body of literature is studied in depth. At Dartmouth, which has a trimester calendar, freshmen take their seminar after they have had a first term of "literature and composition." At Mills freshmen may take their seminar in either of two semesters, and that is all the English they are required to

---

[61] Beloit College, 150 miles further south in Wisconsin, has instituted an "Underclass Common Course" which resembles Lawrence's program but is organized around certain large themes. Called "Man in Perspective," it proceeds from consideration of "What Is Man?" to "Who Am I?" and "The Individual and Society," topics broad enough to encompass almost any work or discipline.

take. Dartmouth allows its students a limited choice of seminars; Mills assigns its freshmen arbitrarily. Seminars at Dartmouth are limited to fifteen students, at Mills to twelve; instructors in both programs are therefore able to devote a good deal of time to individual students and their writing.

At Dartmouth members of the department who wish to participate in the seminar program (or English 2, as it is called) submit descriptions of the courses they propose to teach to the Freshman Steering Committee, which judges the feasibility of each proposal and rejects those which seem too esoteric or otherwise inappropriate. It is agreed that the same amount of writing will be assigned in all courses, but decisions on other matters--frequency and duration of meetings, classroom procedures, and the like--are left to the individual instructors. The topics and designs of most seminars derive directly from the instructors' primary professional interests or academic specialties, and a great advantage of the program is that it allows teachers--especially young teachers--to teach what they know best and find most interest ng. The program also encourages experimentation and serves as a seed bed for more advanced courses. In recent years members of the Dartmouth faculty have offered seminars with such intriguing titles as "The Education of the Young Man in Literature," "Worlds within Worlds" (a study of fantasies), and "Initiation as a Theme in Fiction." One man regularly devotes the whole of his ten-week seminar to a single play by Shakespeare; students present a performance of the play at the end of the course. Freshman seminars at Mills are similarly limited in scope. One is titled "The Great Romantics"; another deals only with Joyce and his works. At Dartmouth (which inaugurated its program in 1958) the freshman seminars have become a well-established institution, and now other departments contribute courses which may be taken in lieu of English 2. All students are required to do the stipulated amoung of writing, but their papers may now be about "Early Greek Mathematics" or "The Literature of Science" rather than "Conrad and James." In this respect Dartmouth's program resembles Cornell's new "Freshman Humanities Program," which will soon be described.

Albert Kitzhaber was a visiting member of the Dartmouth faculty when he conducted the investigation which resulted in his report, Themes, Theories and Therapy, and in that book he had occasion to comment on English 2. After acknowledging that the freshman seminars had "undeniable attractions"--among them that they were "genuinely college level courses and . . . genuinely courses in English"--Kitzhaber criticized English 2 on two counts: first, that it lacks uniformity ("When only general guides are provided for the content of such a course, there is a danger that individualism will become idiosyncrasy") and, second, that the focus of the seminars is "excessively narrow."

> One may question whether the freshman year is the proper time for such specialization. . . . If a seminar is to deserve the name, the students in it must already have a

large fund of general knowledge about the field being studied, as well as a certain amount of specialized knowledge; if they lack these qualifications, they cannot contribute usefully to the kind of discussion that is the life blood of a true seminar, nor can they profitably pursue the investigation of a special topic within the general field to which the seminar is restricted. . . . Other colleges, then, that might be tempted to introduce a course like Dartmouth's English 2, which would certainly be attractive to most English departments, should first pause to consider whether such a course does indeed serve the best interests of the freshmen who must take it--whether, that is, students are mature enough and have read widely enough by the age of eighteen to profit from a course of this sort.[62]

Evidently neither the Dartmouth nor the Mills faculty was persuaded by these criticisms. Both testify with great conviction that their freshmen are competent to participate in and to profit from their specialized courses. They are aware that there can be little uniformity in their programs and that they cannot be sure that all their freshmen will learn the same things, but, as the chairman at Mills has written, "So far the advantages of the new system both in quality and morale appear greatly to outweigh any possible disadvantages." The chief advantage, they say, is that students have their first opportunity to engage in serious scholarship and to make their own discoveries, discoveries which usually pressure good, individually motivated prose. If the seminar succeeds in seizing the student's mind, he or she may learn not only much of what there is to know about a limited topic but also "a great deal more: that true knowledge arises not from accepting the material presented but from thinking about it; that [one] needs to think straight, to read properly, to write clearly in order for there to be any two-way traffic in ideas; that study in depth inevitably becomes study in breadth as [one] becomes aware of the interconnections of literature with anthropology, history, philosophy, psychology and sociology."[63] When this happens, the freshman seminars, which may seem the very opposite of the general education courses so popular elsewhere, may accomplish the purposes of general education as nothing else can.

The Future of Freshman English

At the NCTE convention in 1959, Warner Rice of the University of Michigan read a paper with the arresting title "A Proposal for the Abolition of Freshman English, as It Is Now Commonly Taught, from the College Curriculum." It was a finely reasoned, highly cogent brief, which, if it had been widely heeded, might have dealt a death blow to an obviously infirm institution. Some of Rice's reasons for advocating the elimination of freshman English were:

---

[62] Pp. 39-40.

[63] Elizabeth Marie Pope, "Seminars for Freshmen: Report on an Experiment," Mills College Magazine, Autumn 1964, p. 10.

1. That it is not--or should not be--needed. Students should acquire the competence freshman English is designed to give them before they reach college, or they should not be admitted.

2. That freshman English doesn't work. "If good habits of reading, writing, and speaking have not been inculcated before the student is of college age, it is unlikely that he will be greatly benefited by two semesters of freshman English."[64] Students who are required to take these courses are so ill-motivated, Rice said, they they seldom profit from them.

3. That eliminating freshman English would save time and money. It would also "encourage the current movement to fix responsibility for instruction in elementary subjects--language courses, mathematics up to calculus, etc., upon the high schools; and here responsibility must increasingly reside."[65] The lot of the college English teachers, most of whom do not really want to teach freshman English, would be greatly improved.

In the course of amplifying and defending his basic argument Rice attempted to meet many of the objections he knew his proposal would evoke: that the secondary schools are not doing the job which he would delegate to them (the community should insist that they do it, he replied, and the colleges should help them); that freshman English, though admittedly imperfect, should be improved, not abandoned (its purposes "can be better achieved in other ways," he said); that freshman English is needed to support graduate students ("it ought to be possible," Rice contended, "to use many graduate students to assist with instructional tasks more congenial to them than composition, and for which their preparation would be more appropriate"). He knew that it would not be easy to persuade the rest of the faculty to consent to the abolition of freshman English "because with it must go the comfortable assumption that the English Department is solely responsible for good writing." But this assumption is false, and it must be replaced by the truth enunciated at Lawrence (and quoted above): "that the training in correct and effective writing is the responsibility of the whole faculty and not of the English Department alone." "The goal," Rice declared, "must be acceptance of responsibility for better English by the whole college community. Nothing less will prove genuinely efficacious in the end."[66] Having surrendered its monopoly on the teaching of composition, the Department of English should return to what it teaches best.

---

64 College English, 21 (1960), 361.

65 P. 362.

66 Pp. 363, 365.

> It will be asked what will replace the freshman English now taught if, by various expedients, it proves possible to get along without it. The answer must be a firm and emphatic: Nothing. College requirements should simply be reduced by whatever number of hours freshman English now absorbs. . . . There need be no question, of course, as to the propriety of offering some English courses to first-year students. But the English course designed for freshmen should be (as some now are) a course in subjects which the English Department is best prepared to teach--language and literature. It should be elective, or should have an acknowledged place in a program of general studies. Like other courses, it should make considerable demands on the student's skill in reading and writing. Its purpose, like its subject matter, should be clearly defined, and clearly within the competence of those assigned to teach it.[67]

But the inertia of departments of English is about the same as that of most institutional bodies, and so it is not surprising that, ten years later, Professor Rice's eminently sensible program for reform has not been adopted by many departments (including his own). As reported above, only about 10 percent of all departments have recently reduced the amount of English freshmen are required to take, and the number of departments which have abolished freshman English is very small indeed. Nevertheless there are signs which indicate that the trend among institutions of highest prestige--and eventually among those which follow their example--is towards effecting the revolution Rice advocated. At many of these institutions members of the English department are convinced that freshmen arriving at college today are better trained in writing skills than students who entered twenty years ago.[68]

---

[67] Pp. 365-366.

[68] Not everyone shares this estimate, and there seems to be no way to prove it right or wrong. Although many debates over freshman English and how it can be improved founder on the precise question of just how well today's students can write and whether or not they need instruction in composition, it appears that no one, not even those agencies best equipped to do so, has made an historical survey of college students' verbal skills. Neither the College Board nor the Educational Testing Service has conducted such a study, but John A. Valentine, Executive Director of Examinations for the CEEB, reports that teachers who have served as readers of the English Composition Test for many years often express the opinion that students' prose is improving, and Fred I. Godshalk, Senior Examiner for ETS, confirms this report. Godshalk, who believes that most students teach themselves to write, suspects that students may be more skilled but not better trained, that whatever improvement is noticed should probably be attributed to changes in the secondary school curriculum, which now permits students to read better works of literature at an earlier age (for example, Moby Dick in the tenth grade). It may well be that today's freshmen are more sophisticated than their predecessors or more adept at mimicry, but that fact alone would justify offering them a more substantial--or at least a different--freshman course.

Some departments which have contributed to the improvement of secondary school teaching think they begin to see the fruits of those efforts. A paragraph in a report recently prepared by the Department of English at Indiana University expresses this conviction:

> One consequence of our efforts in the area of pedagogical training--along with other factors--has been the improvement in the high school teaching of English composition, which, in turn, has made possible the abbreviation of our freshman composition program. If this pattern continues, and high school students come to the university increasingly better prepared in English, we can further abbreviate the program from two semesters to one by 1972-1973, and eventually eliminate it altogether. We should like to see adequate training in composition become the complete responsibility of the high schools within the next ten years.[69]

Among those colleges and universities which have reduced the amount of freshman English students are required to take are Duke, Oberlin, and the University of Washington. Others have eliminated classroom instruction in composition, just as Indiana hopes to do in the near future. Pomona abandoned this part of its program in 1963; Chicago did so in 1966, after having required composition for twenty-five years. At Occidental College all freshmen now enroll in a general course entitled "The History of Civilization," and only those whose papers for that course show serious deficiencies (or who are remanded by at least two instructors in other courses) are placed in English 1, a course in composition. In every case the principal reason given for abbreviating the freshman program or for reducing the amount of formal instruction in composition is that students' needs have changed, that most entering students no longer have an urgent need for training in composition. At these highly selective institutions, then, it would appear that Professor Rice's vision may soon be fulfilled.

A significant number of such institutions have also converted their English courses for freshmen to courses in literature, just as he suggested. Although only 11.5 percent of all departments devote their freshman programs exclusively to literature, some 36 percent of the "exemplary" departments visited by the survey do so. The list includes Tulane, the University of Pennsylvania, Kenyon, the University of Buffalo, and many others. Kitzhaber noted this trend--and deplored it--in 1963. To him the return to literature seemed a self-indulgent abdication of the department's responsibility to teach composition and what he called "the principles of good writing." Those who espouse the course in literature would reply that they know of no such set of principles, that they can and do teach good writing by teaching

---

69 "Report on the Department's Self-Study" (Mimeographed).

literature, and that the multiple advantages of the course in literature more than justify substituting it for the course in composition as such. Some of those advantages Kitzhaber himself conceded in passing; they are that "the teacher knows what he is talking about, [that] he is likely to be enthusiastic about his subject matter, and [that] the students have something to write about that the teacher is qualified to pass judgment on."[70] To many English teachers at colleges and universities which attract large numbers of the nation's best students, these seem sufficient reasons for abandoning the concept of "therapy" and for devoting the freshman course to the finest educational experience the department has to offer.

As it reverts to its specialty, the department must intensify its efforts to persuade other departments to join it in teaching writing; as Professor Rice said, "The goal must be acceptance of responsibility for better English by the whole college community." Most departments of English report little progress towards that goal, but just how it may be reached is illustrated by a major reform recently inaugurated at Cornell University. In 1965 the College of Arts and Sciences at that institution voted to abolish freshman English. It had required a term of "Composition" and a term of "Introduction to Literature" for many years, but dissatisfaction with that program had been growing, for most of the reasons reviewed above. A bold new program, called "Freshman Humanities," was instituted in 1966. Under this plan a battery of from thirty-five to forty one-semester courses is offered. Only about half of these are taught by the department of English; the rest are designed and conducted by other departments in the humanities group, including history, government, philosophy, and the fine arts. Almost all are specialized courses in limited focus, very like the freshman seminars at Dartmouth and Mills. Among the titles listed for the first year were "American Literature and Values," "The Literature of Reason and Unreason," and "The Public Arts" (taught by the department of speech and drama). Freshmen are required to take two of these courses, one each term of their first year. Soon after they are accepted for admission to Cornell they are invited to select the four freshman humanities courses which interest them most, and every effort is made to give them two of their choices. Neither need be a course in English; if they like, they may take no English as such during their freshman year. Thus Cornell has effected another of Professor Rice's reforms: its English courses for freshmen are elective, and they do "have an acknowledged place in a program of general studies." Mandatory freshman English, with its captive and often dissatisfied audience, is a thing of the past at Cornell.

The freshman course, Rice said, "should make considerable demands on the student's skill in reading and writing. Its purpose, like its subject matter, should be clearly defined, and clearly within the competence of those who teach it." The beauty of Cornell's solution to the problem of freshman English is that it meets all these requirements while affording teachers in several fields opportunities to try new courses "clearly within their competence" which may engage the freshman mind. Here, as at Dartmouth, Mills, and Lawrence, a stipulated amount of writing is done in each course,

---

70 Themes, Theories, and Therapy, p. 97.

and it is the duty of each teacher, whatever his field, to demonstrate by his attention to his students' papers that it is important to use language well to accomplish the purposes of his discipline. Meanwhile the talents of teachers of divergent views may be enlisted, because it is not necessary for all of them to agree on some grand scheme for the education of freshmen. Among the members of any good English department there are likely to be representatives of several disparate--even antagonistic--views of writing and how it should be taught: Cornell's pluralistic program admits of a course in "The Logic of Rhetoric of Expression" as well as a course in "Lyric Poetry." By redistributing the teaching of composition among the several departments whose disciplines put a premium on effective written expression, Cornell has probably pointed the way towards the "English" future freshmen will take. They will take English as part of a serious study which demands the use of language. Over the nation they may write a few million fewer themes each year, but more of their themes--perhaps most--should be worth reading.

Other Interdepartmental Programs

General Education. The term "general education" gained currency immediately after the Second World War, largely as a consequence of Harvard's well-publicized decision to institute a new multi-departmental program for undergraduates. In its report Harvard's planning committee admitted it was difficult to define the rubric it had selected.

> The term, general education, is somewhat vague and colorless; it does not mean some airy education in knowledge in general (if there be such knowledge), nor does it mean education for all in the sense of universal education. It is used to indicate that part of a student's whole education which looks first of all to his life as a responsible human being and citizen; while the term, special education, indicates that part which looks to the student's competence in some occupation.[71]

With no more precise definition than this to guide them the committee set about to sketch a program of nonspecialized courses, a certain number of which all undergraduates would be required to take. Three areas were specified: mathematics and science, the social sciences, and the humanities. Offerings of the humanities would include several courses in literature, and as described in the original prospectus these were to be broadly conceived introductions to "Great Texts" and would be concerned only with "the greatest, most universal, most essential human preoccupations."[72] Uninhibited by nice definitions, members of the English department refurbished old courses and

---

71 General Education in a Free Society (Cambridge, 1958), p. 51.

72 P. 207.

invented new ones which ranged from studies of genres ("The Epic and the Novel") through thematic courses ("Problems of Good and Evil in Western Civilization") to intensive practice in critical reading (Reuben Brower's excellent "Introduction to Literature"). Eventually freshman English itself was converted to a half-course called General Education A, a sampling of logic, rhetoric, and literary criticism which was required of all Harvard and Radcliffe freshmen.

Elsewhere general education courses in the humanities usually took the form of lofty surveys of vast expanses of cultural history. The "Humanities and Historical Studies Program" which "comprises about a fourth of the academic work of the freshman and sophomore years" at Grinnell College is typical. It consists of two one-semester courses in the humanities and two in history. According to Grinnell's catalogue,

> it provides an interdisciplinary approach to history and literature covering the period from the ancient Greek world to the present day. The program begins in the first semester of the freshman year, with a humanities course on masterpieces of classical literature and history. The courses that follow are devoted to the evolution of Western society and to great works of our intellectual heritage, first from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution and then in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The program also includes rigorous training in the writing of the English language. The study of masterpieces of literature and great social documents provides the students with topics for their papers, and the careful analysis of these prose texts fosters and inspires achievement in the discipline of writing. The underlying assumption is that the ability to write is associated with the ability to read.

During the first term of the humanities course students read the Homeric epics, three Greek tragedies, some Aristotle, some Thucydides, and some Plato; during the second they study selected masterworks from Dante to Blake. Most members of the English department (as well as some members of the foreign language departments) teach this course, which serves as a substitute for freshman English. General education programs of this kind remain popular throughout the nation. Table 62 shows how many departments in institutions of different sizes participate in such programs and which courses they offer. (Classification of the courses is somewhat arbitrary, because there is much overlapping among the types. Some departments offer courses of more than one type.)

TABLE 62

General Education Programs

Size of School	Percent of departments participating
Small	33.8
Medium	37.5
Large	33.5
ALL	37.3

(Continued)

TABLE 62 continued

Type of course	Percent of departments participating (n=127)
World Literature	39.4
Humanities	30.7
Western Civilization	14.7
Classical Tradition	5.5
Other	10.2

From these statistics it becomes clear that over one-third of all English departments now participate in general education programs, that such programs are somewhat more common among small schools than among large, and that the general education course most frequently offered is the survey of world literature.[73] If the college has a general education program, all or some part of it is usually required of all students: at 37 percent of those institutions which offer general education programs all students must take all courses in the program, at 9 percent some courses are required, and at 19 percent general education courses may be used to fulfill "group requirements." Most colleges and universities continue to insist that students begin their undergraduate careers with one or two years of generalized study; general education courses are designed to give those studies focus and coherence. Rather than allowing beginning students to roam among the several disciplines, gathering what understanding they may, proponents of these courses prefer to synthesize and summarize, to prepare packaged units of cultural and intellectual history for their students so that their exploratory studies will be directed and controlled. Many English teachers doubt the validity of this procedure. They are disturbed by the superficiality of general education courses, and they fear that students--many of whom are only too willing to accept "official" interpretations--will be deluded into supposing that the history of Western civilization can be summarized in two terms or that they "know" The Divine Comedy after they have spent their two weeks on Dante. When general education replaces freshman English, the percentage of the department's total teaching load which must be expended on lower division courses is greatly reduced: departments which participate in general education programs contribute an average of only 8.4 percent of their total efforts to those courses, whereas freshman English consumes an average of 40.7 percent. (Thus, it is not surprising that college administrators tend to favor general education programs, which seem so fortunately susceptible to mass educating by the lecture method.) But members of English departments which have acceded to the demand for general education (including the department at Grinnell) often express regret that they have consented to collaborate in an educational venture they cannot always respect.

---

[73] That the term "general education" has never been well defined and is not yet well understood is attested by the fact that several respondents listed conventional courses of other types (for example, the freshman course in composition) under this heading. None of these was counted in Table 62.

Interdisciplinary Courses. A distinction may be made between general education programs and true interdisciplinary courses. Although the former may be interdepartmental, they need not be interdisciplinary: often the English teachers who participate teach nothing but literature, the historians nothing but history, and so on. The students are exposed to a series of experts, discoursing on their separate specialties. In the interdisciplinary course, on the other hand, some amalgamation of two or more disciplines is attempted. Traditional boundaries between academic fields are crossed as teachers collaborate in close working teams to examine their topics more fully than the practice of a single discipline allows. Usually these efforts are prompted by the realization that the conventional distinctions among the disciplines are arbitrary and artificial and by the hope that fresh insights will be derived from bringing variously trained minds to bear on a subject. They are also designed to demonstrate to students the interrelation of the disciplines.

Of all college English departments, 26.7 percent now participate in such interdisciplinary projects. The number varies with the size and type of the institution (Table 63)..

TABLE 63

Interdisciplinary Courses

	Percent of departments participating
Small	28.6
Medium	32.4
Large	20.9
Public	17.3
Private	30.0
Sectarian	35.5

The medium-sized college (with an enrollment of from 1,500 to 2,500 and an English department of from thirteen to eighteen members) seems to provide those circumstances which are most congenial to the development of interdisciplinary courses: the faculty is large enough to supply a sufficient number of teachers willing to undertake such experiments, and the academic community is small enough to allow them to meet. The relatively high percentage of departments at sectarian schools which are engaged in such courses--twice that at public schools--may be attributed to the popularity of courses which combine literature with religion. As Table 64 shows, courses of that type are tied for second among all interdisciplinary courses in which English teachers participate. The remaining 43 percent of interdisciplinary courses are of assorted types, none of which is represented by more than a few examples. These include courses which combine English and anthrolopology, English and psychology, English and sociology, English and theater, humanities and science, and journalism and sociology. The most common interdisciplinary course is that which combines literature and history, the most literary of the other disciplines. Harvard had a separate department of history and literature for many years, and that program always attracted its share of the college's best undergraduates. Several other institutions

TABLE 64

Types of Interdisciplinary Courses

Disciplines combined	Percent offered
Literature and history	14.0
Literature and religion	10.5
Literature, art, and music	10.5
Literature and philosophy	9.3
American civilization*	7.0
Comparative literature*	5.8

* These single courses should not be confused with the programs in American studies and in comparative literature discussed in this section.

reserve their interdisciplinary courses for honors students or use honors seminars as occasions for experimenting with interdisciplinary courses. Because they usually require team-teaching and small classes for their success, these courses are especially costly. That fact, the scarcity of instructors who are competent and willing to contribute to such joint enterprises, and the difficulty of effecting close collaboration among faculty members of different training and interests have inhibited the growth of interdisciplinary programs. Almost all institutions which consider undertaking curricular reforms think first of obliterating--or, at any rate, of redefining--the traditional boundaries which separate the disciplines or of redeploying the faculty to staff new courses which will more nearly address the concerns of today's students. They often find, however, that such plans are difficult to execute because academic provincialism is difficult to eradicate. The figures presented above reveal that English departments are no less parochial than others: only about a quarter of them are currently engaged in interdisciplinary projects, and those which do participate in such ventures devote an average of only 6.4 percent of their total teaching effort to interdisciplinary courses.

American Studies. The very notion of allowing undergraduates to concentrate solely on the culture of their own country seems wrong to some teachers and departments. Such specialization may be appropriate at the graduate level, they say, but it makes no sense for undergraduates. "We see little place for an undergraduate 'major' in American Studies, or for a B.A. degree in it," officers of the English department at Indiana University said, "and the American Studies Committee was in substantial agreement about this when we first set up our graduate program."[74]

[74] Statement prepared for interview.

Other departments flatly disagree. They believe that a well-planned, well-administered interdepartmental program which enables students to investigate interrelationships between American literature and the history of American society makes a perfectly legitimate undergraduate major. The department of English at the University of North Carolina is one of these, and in 1966 it inaugurated an American studies plan which illustrates the form such programs may take. Its initial announcement described the new curriculum as follows:

> The program is designed for students who wish to study American life from many points of view--as it has been expressed in politics, religion, literature, philosophy, the fine arts, urban planning, the structure of the American economy, the press. . . . The student takes a broad range of courses from many departments, in addition to two special courses for majors: Introduction to American Studies, to be taken normally in the second semester of the sophomore year, and American Studies 80, a senior course. These courses are designed to encourage the student to relate the information and ideas he has acquired in his departmental courses, to notice, for example, the relevance of the novel to politics, of urban planning to assumptions about the good life, of philosophy and religion to the country's economic history.

It could be argued that programs of this kind are actually less specialized than the conventional program for the major in English: they permit--indeed, require--students to take "a broad range of courses from many departments," and they encourage students to relate what they find in literature to a variety of extra-literary matters. Not many departments have been convinced by this argument, however, or not many institutions have felt they could afford such programs: at present only 13.7 percent of all four-year colleges and universities offer American studies programs for undergraduates.[75] The number of students who elect the major of American Studies is very small; some departments report no students have yet availed themselves of opportunities for American Studies advertised in their catalogues. Thus it may be said that neither English teachers nor their students have generally embraced this curricular innovation, and once again their conservatism and inertia are demonstrated.

Comparative Literature. It is reliably reported that "more people in the United States are studying modern foreign languages than ever before. They study them longer and they study more different languages. New instructional methods, new content, and new materials for the study of languages have been introduced. Teachers are more numerous and more competent."[76]

---

[75] This figure varies predictably with the size of the institution: it is 10 percent for small and medium-sized schools, 21.2 percent for large.

[76] John S. Diekhoff, NDEA and Modern Foreign Languages (New York: MLA, 1965), p. 1.

Despite these advances, which must mean that more students are coming to college today reasonably well prepared to read works of literature in languages other than English, English teachers and their colleagues in the foreign languages have almost entirely neglected another very obvious opportunity for interdepartmental collaboration: only 5.6 percent of all English departments participate in true comparative literature courses for undergraduates. There are few English departments which do not teach foreign literature in translation[77] but very few indeed which take advantage of the undergraduate's improved competence in foreign languages to effect a fruitful comparison of works in several languages. Several large universities now offer graduate programs in comparative literature, and therefore it may be assumed that instructors competent to teach multilingual courses are now being trained. At present, however, their competence goes almost wholly unused at the undergraduate level. The course which matches Lazarillo de Tormes with Tom Jones or the course which makes a comprehensive study of Romanticism by comparing Leopardi and Wordsworth, among others, is almost nowhere to be found.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

College English teachers are not, then, a very venturesome lot. Although they tell themselves they should, they seldom leave the relatively safe grounds of their own preserve, and what innovation they contemplate or accomplish is limited, in most cases, to the confines of their own discipline or their own language. Perhaps this inclination to stay at home is a perfectly proper impulse to avoid overextending themselves as they did earlier in the century; it may also be a heritage of the New Criticism of the thirties and forties with its salutary emphasis on attention to literature as literature. What then seemed an admirable purity may now seem mere timidity, however, and the time for excursions out of "English" into neighboring academic domains may once again be at hand. This time English teachers must be willing to give as well as take.

Teacher Training Program

Over three-fourths of all college English departments now offer or participate in teacher training programs, so it is safe to say with Wayne Booth that "the overwhelming majority of departments are now thoroughly committed to assuming a responsible role in the improvement of English instruction at all levels."[78]

---

[77] And at least one which offers a major in "world literature": at Occidental College students may elect the regular major in English or a major in "Comparative Literature." Almost all works studied in the latter, however, are read in translation.

[78] "The Undergraduate Program," The College Teaching of English, p. 221.

Most of them, however, discharge this responsibility blindly, without knowing much about what it is they would improve: although 77.8 percent of all departments are involved to some extent in the preparation of teachers for the secondary schools, only 43 percent of those involved regularly communicate with schools which employ teachers of the kind they train.[79] Departments in large, public universities are more likely to have established such communication--55 percent of them have done so--but a higher-than-average number of these (about 85 percent) offer teacher training programs. The general picture is of a profession whose right hand does not know what its left hand is doing, a situation James Squire has rightly deplored:

> I can no more conceive of a truly effective preparatory program being controlled by a faculty without direct contact with school teachers than I can conceive of an effective school English program without direct contact with scholars of English. Our subject is no simple body of content and theory to be walled away from today's social, cultural and educational concerns. . . . No development will sooner undercut much that we have achieved in American education than a retreat of college departments from assuming their share of responsibility for the entire spectrum of English instruction.[80]

Most department chairmen would agree with this assertion; most are apologetic for neglecting the very schools they serve. In self-defense, however, they would remind their critics that it is extremely difficult to find college teachers of English who are genuinely interested in the problems of the secondary schools and who are willing to devote part of their professional careers to helping the schools. With Jeremiah S. Finch they would point to "a state of mind which prevails widely in departments of English."

> In extreme form it is found in those who profess total indifference toward education below the collegiate level. The more common manifestation of this state of mind is found among our less austere colleagues who protest that they are concerned about the public schools but do little or nothing to demonstrate it. Their views are likely to be a curious blend of distrust and apathy, all too often based--in most unscholarly fashion--on inadequate or inaccurate evidence. The irony is that many of these very people are themselves dwelling in houses which are not in good order.[81]

---

79 Those departments which have effected such "articulation" with the schools have used the following means: 23.9 percent hold or attend conferences and workshops; 15.7 percent (of English departments, not of departments or schools of education) supervise practice teaching; 2.2 percent make occasional, informal visits to the schools; and 17.9 percent rely on other means, such as advanced placement programs, literary contests, film programs, and "college nights." For a comprehensive review of relations between school and college faculties in this field see Donald J. Gray's chapter in The College Teaching of English entitled "Articulation between High School and College English."

80 "The Running Water and the Standing Stone," PMLA, 83 (1968), 527.

81 College English Departments and Teacher Preparation," PMLA, 80 (1965), 4.

The majority of departments must assume that their training programs will somehow contribute to the improvement of teaching whether or not they are nourished by direct contact with the schools. At any rate, they continue to offer such programs, in response to heavy demand: the major in the teaching of English remains among the three most popular majors at 76 percent of all colleges and universities—indeed, it is slightly more popular across the nation than the regular major in English. (As might be expected, teacher training programs are most popular at private, non-coeducational colleges, many of which are schools for women; see Table 65.)

TABLE 65

Teaching Major in English: Rank among All Majors

Percent of all institutions in each class

Type of School	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Below Fourth
Public	27	27	20.6	7.9	17.4
Private	31.7	36.2	17.1	2.4	14.6
Sectarian	23.8	35.7	11.9	11.9	16.7
Non-coed	35.5	38.7	6.4	3.2	16.1
Coed	25.2	29.6	20	8.7	16.5
ALL	27.4	31.5	17.1	7.5	16.4

The English department's contribution to the major in teaching varies greatly among four-year colleges and universities; some departments conduct their own programs, supplying instruction not only in language and literature but also in teaching methods; others--and they are the majority--cooperate with departments or schools of education to produce teachers who will meet local certification requirements. The number of departments which participate in teacher training programs and the percentage which subscribe to each procedure are indicated in Table 66. Less than a fifth of those English departments which contribute to the preparation of teachers conduct their own programs, then; the rest collaborate with departments or schools of education in joint programs. Closer examination of programs administered solely by English departments helps to explain why such collaboration is often difficult to maintain.

When the English department designs and controls its own program,

TABLE 66

English Department's Participation in Teacher Training Programs

Size of School	Percent which Participate in teacher training programs	Offer own program	Cooperate with school of education	Other
Small	72.7	18.0	53.3	1.3
Medium	79.5	18.0	61.6	
Large	86.0	20.9	65 1	
Type of School				
Public	86.4	23.3	63.1	
Private	67.4	12.6	53.8	1.1
Sectarian	79.2	20.8	57.1	1.3
Graduate Program				
Yes	83.3	22.2	61.1	
No	74.2	16.8	56.3	1.2
ALL	77.8*	18.9	58.1	0.7

*In 1963 James Conant declared that "three-quarters of the four-year colleges and universities in the nation, including nearly every type of institution, are in the business of preparing teachers."--The Education of American Teachers (New York, 1963), p. 74.

it usually imposes no requirements for admission. Of such departments 63.3 percent do not have special requirements. Others mention the requirements listed in Table 67.

TABLE 67

Requirements for Admission to Teacher Training Programs

	Percent of departments requiring
Freshman English	40.3
Junior status	30.7
Sophomore status	29.0
Foreign language	24.2
Special matriculation	4.8
B average	3.2
C+ average	14.5
C average	32.3
C- average	6.5

The most common prerequisite is completion of the freshman course, but this is not a special requirement because, on most campuses, all students must pass that course. Similarly the achievement of junior status and a C average does not distinguish the teaching major from most others. English departments, then, do not apply special criteria as they select candidates for the teaching degree; certainly those who study for that degree under their auspices are not members of an elite.

Once they have been admitted to a teacher training program administered by the English department, students take an average of 30 credit hours of required courses. This figure (which may not be perfectly valid because of the difficulty of defining a "credit" and of comparing programs at institutions which have different academic calendars) is lower than the average number of credit hours required when the teacher training program is conducted by the school of education (33.5) and lower than the average number required for the regular major in English (37.6). It would seem, then, that English departments demand less of their majors in teaching than they do of their regular majors but also less than schools of education demand of their majors who are preparing to teach English.

Some sense of what departments of English consider an appropriate set of courses for the major in teaching is afforded by Table 68, which indicates how frequently courses of certain types are required in their programs for prospective teachers. When this list is compared with a list of courses most commonly required for the regular major in English (see page 159), the following differences appear: requirements for the regular major include more courses in literature and literary criticism (for example, the survey of English literature is required for the regular major by 74.8 percent of all departments, for the major in teaching by only 48.6 percent); on the other hand, Shakespeare is more frequently required in teacher training programs than in regular programs. Linguistics and advanced composition are required in about 60 percent of training programs to about 35 percent of regular programs. In general, then, this comparison confirms one's impression that prospective teachers are asked to take more "practical" courses and fewer "liberal" courses than regular majors in English.

Is the typical program one may infer from this list of requirements an appropriate course of studies for students who are preparing to teach in the schools? Will it give them the knowledge and skills they need to become competent teachers? Since 1967 when the English Teacher Preparation Study sponsored by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, NCTE, and MLA published its "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English" it has been possible to identify most of the competencies teachers of English should have and to approach an evaluation of existing or proposed teacher training programs. Although the authors of this report were careful to state that it was not their intention to "identify in any detail . . . specific courses which might exist within a program or the arrangement of such courses, nor [to] attempt to prescribe the specific number of credit hours in English required for adequate preparation," it is legitimate to compare the generalized recommendations of the study with the analysis of English departments' requirements for the degree in teaching given above. To do so is to conclude that many English departments which offer their own teacher preparation programs do not now follow the Study's guidelines and do not meet many of the standards it recommends. Thus, the report stat s that "the teacher of English at any level should have . . . an understanding of the nature of language," and in its amplifying remarks it makes it clear that this means "he should have some understanding of phonology, morphology, and syntax . . . [and] should be well grounded in one grammatical system and have a working acquaintance with at least one other system."[82] In order to acquire familiarity with these matters, most students will need a college course in linguistics, but, as we have seen, only 59.6 percent of all English departments which conduct their own teacher training programs now require such a course.[83]

---

82 PMLA, 82 (1967), 21, 24.

83 In 1960 NCTE found that 58 percent of all four-year colleges and universities offered courses in the history of the English language and 25.3 percent required that course of English majors. Only 28 percent offered modern English grammar, and 17.4 percent required it. (The National Interest and the Teaching of English, pp. 67, 68.) Today 79.5 percent offer courses in linguistics, 59.6 percent require at least one for the major in teaching, and 29 percent require one for the regular major.

TABLE 68

Courses Required for Teacher Training Programs
Administered by English Department

	Percent of departments requiring
Shakespeare	70.2
Survey of American literature	68.1
Linguistics	59.6
Advanced composition	55.3
Survey of English literature	48.6
Period courses	38.3
Teaching methods	34.0
Electives	19.2
Literary criticism	19.2
Genre courses	17.0
Middle English, Chaucer	14.9
Modern literature	14.9
Individual authors	12.8
Speech	12.8
World literature	10.6
Special seminars	8.6
Drama	4.3
Other*	19.2

*Includes such courses as children's literature, journalism, library science, and classical tradition.

Similarly, the guidelines prescribe "instruction in writing beyond the college freshman level, either through an advanced course in composition or through supervised individual instruction and practice." But Advanced Composition is now required in only 55.3 percent of teacher training programs administered by departments of English.84 The most obvious discrepancy between English department practice and the Study's recommendations concerns the course in teaching methods. The report flatly states that "The teacher of English at any level should have studied methods of teaching English," but when English departments are left to design their own programs for the major in teaching only 34 percent of them require the methods course.85 Obviously the English departments' faith in the value of teaching teaching is not much greater than it ever was, despite the educationists' continued insistence on the need for such training.

This survey did not examine programs for training teachers of English conducted solely by departments or schools of education. It did determine, however, that although such programs are heavily influenced by the certification requirements of the several states and although they almost invariably devote some time to courses in methods, they may require more subject-matter courses in English than programs conducted by the English departments themselves. In addition to courses in education and related fields (for example, child psychology), students in school of education programs are required to take an average of 35.5 credit hours in English, slightly more than is usually required by the department of English of its majors in teaching, slightly less than is required of its regular majors. For college teachers of English these are humbling facts: they indicate that the schools of education, to whom the English faculty has sometimes been reluctant to entrust the training of the teachers who will prepare its undergraduates, may now be doing a better job at that task than they themselves can or will do when it [illegible] to them.

Courses for Non-Majors

Well over half the students enrolled in sophomore, junior, and senior courses

---

84 In 1960 advanced composition was required of teaching majors at only 41 percent of all four-year colleges and universities. (Ibid., p. 70)

85 A curious sidelight--which proves, if nothing else, how confusing statistics may become--is that 49 percent of all departments of English offer courses in methods. It will be remembered, however, that the group of departments we are now discussing--those which conduct their own programs for preparing teachers--constitutes only 19 percent of the 1,320 departments in the country. Of this group only 34 percent require the course in methods; others may offer it as an elective. There remain the 58.1 percent which collaborate with departments or schools of education to prepare teachers, and in many of these programs the professional educators supply the methods course.

in English are not majors in English: the average percentage of non-majors in courses above the freshman level is 55.8. Students specializing in English account for a majority of enrollments in courses above the freshman level at only 37.9 percent of all institutions; at all the rest they are a minority. (The proportion of majors to non-majors in courses above the freshman level varies somewhat with the size and type of school. As Table 69 reveals, the smaller the school, the more probable it is that the majority will be non-majors, which may mean that English is more popular among non-majors at small schools than large. For some reasons, non-specialists are in the majority at more private schools than public or sectarian, even though private schools are least likely to require English courses above the freshman level. See footnote 86 below.) There are two principal reasons for the preponderance of non-majors in these courses: the first is that most institutions--63.7 percent, to be exact--do not ask their students to declare their majors until the end of the sophomore year or later, and therefore there are no majors in sophomore courses--all students in courses at that level are considered to

TABLE 69

Percentage of Non-Majors

	Under half are non-majors	Over half are non-majors
Small	33.3	66.6
Medium	40.7	59.3
Large	46.9	53.1
Public	44.5	55.5
Private	35.7	64.3
Sectarian	34.0	66.0
ALL	37.9	62.1

be non-majors; the second is that 81.7 percent of all colleges and universities require or encourage all students to take a year of English beyond the freshman level.[86] At 43.1 percent of all

[86] Sectarian schools are most likely to require or to encourage a second year of English: 88.7 percent of them do so, as compared with 84.8 percent of public schools and 72.8 percent of private schools.

institutions a second year of English is mandatory; at 38.6 percent English courses may be used to fill "group" or "distribution" requirements. The result is that the department's sophomore courses, like its freshman classes, are populated very largely by representatives of what Harold Martin has called "the commonwealth of students," and its obligation to those students is very great.

Twenty-three percent of all departments meet this obligation by distinguishing between courses for majors and those for non-majors; normally the latter may not be used to fulfill the requirements for the major. Thus, the English department at Pomona College offers a sophomore course entitled "Great Authors" which is specially designed "for students who do not intend to concentrate in English"; it offers another course, "Major English Poets," for those who do. At the University of Kentucky a sophomore course in American literature may not be counted towards the major; it is reserved for non-majors. These courses usually require less specialized reading and fewer papers on easier topics than courses for the major. At the University of Washington, for example, sophomore courses for non-majors survey types of literature and selected works of great writers, while courses for majors examine literary history in greater detail. Classes in the latter are smaller, and grading standards are higher. Departments which differentiate in this way believe they must do so if they are to meet the different educational needs of specialists and non-specialists. Others which oppose such segregation fear that it may encourage premature specialization and may result in homogenized classes which prevent fruitful communication among students of different interests and abilities. It is not a bad idea, they think, to mix the engineers in with the English majors, at least in lower division classes. Much depends, of course, on how competent and how articulate the engineers may be.

Over a third of all departments (36.6 percent) offer specially planned sequences of courses for majors in other fields whose minor is English. In most cases these are regular courses, open to all students, which are considered by the English department to be especially appropriate supplements to the intensive study of other disciplines. The survey of English literature, for example, is often recommended to majors in history. Shakespeare and advanced composition may be suggested for majors in the sciences (if they are permitted to take <u>any</u> courses outside their fields of concentration). In this way departments hope to improve the counseling of non-majors and also, perhaps, to control the enrollments in their general courses.

From the fact that no single course is specified by more than two-fifths of all institutions it may be inferred that there is no consensus on what constitutes a proper sequel to freshman English. Apparently there is agreement only on the nature, not on the substance, of the courses non-majors should be asked to take: Almost all the courses listed above are broad surveys which proceed at a rapid pace through centuries of literary history with time allowed for the reading and discussion of only a few exemplary works. Before it releases him for specialization elsewhere, then, the English

department attempts to discharge its responsibility to the non-major by giving him a panoramic or synoptic view of its wares and perhaps a summary account of what happened in the history of one body of literature. It does so on the assumption that such generalized courses will do him most good, that they will at least provide him with some "background" (even though he may never have the time or the inclination to examine the foreground of the subject) and that education for non-specialists should probably consist of wide coverage rather than intensive study.

The courses in Table 70 are most often required or endorsed for non-majors above the freshman level. (Some schools require more than one; figures are percentages of all institutions.)

TABLE 70

Recommended Non-Major English Courses

Survey of masterworks of English literature	38.2
World literature	26.7
Survey of American literature	23.7
Advanced composition	8.0
General literature	3.4
Modern literature	1.1
Other*	25.2

* Includes literary criticism, linguistics (advanced grammar), poetry, drama, speech, short story, and others, none of which is required by more than 1 percent of all schools.

That this assumption should now be reconsidered is suggested by a comparison of the list of courses which are required of non-majors (or which may be used to fill group requirements) with a list of those courses which are most frequently elected by them. In Table 71 are the courses which regularly attract large numbers of non-majors when they are free to choose their own. (Again, figures are percentages of all departments, and some cited more than one course.)

Only one course which is commonly required ranks high on this list of courses which are most popular with non-majors: the survey of American literature. The next four entries--Shakespeare and the several varieties of modern literature--are seldom prescribed when a second year of English is required. In other words, there is a manifest discrepancy between the type of studies in English non-majors most commonly choose for themselves and the type which is most frequently selected for them. When the choice is left to them they tend to elect courses which appear to have immediate pertinence to their own lives (courses in American or modern literature) or courses of relatively narrow focus (Shakespeare or the genre courses), not the wide-ranging surveys of the literature of the past their elders think right for them. To the full implications of this and other discrepancies between what the students prefer and what the faculty prescribes we shall

TABLE 71
Preferred Non-Major Courses

Survey of American literature	51.8
Shakespeare	46.9
Modern literature	22.8
Modern novel	21.4
Modern drama	20.0
Survey of English literature	18.8
World literature	14.9
Creative writing	8.5
Introduction to literature	8.0
Short story	8.0
Linguistics	7.6
American novel	7.1
Other*	80.8

* Includes advanced composition, Great Books, children's literature, Bible as literature, introduction to drama, folklore, and several others, None of these courses was cited by more than 5 percent of all departments.

return when we discuss students' motives for specializing in English and how they are affecting programs for the major.

The General Curriculum above the Freshman Level

About 80 percent of the courses departments of English offer to sophomores, juniors, and seniors can be classified under ten general headings. The categories overlap to some extent, and the process of classification inevitably obliterates some distinctions and misrepresents some courses. For the purposes of comparing large numbers of curriculums and of defining recurring patterns, however, the following designations will serve:

Courses in the Works of Individual Authors: Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton are most frequently represented under this heading. Courses in the works of two or three authors (for example, Conrad and James) are also included.

American Literature: Includes both survey and period courses in literature by American authors.

Genre Courses: Poetry, drama, the short story, and the novel, taught as such.

Period Courses: Limited to specific periods or episodes in the history of literature (for example, the eighteenth century, the Victorian period.)

Linguistics: Includes advanced grammar and the history of the English language.

Survey Courses: Chronological reviews of the history of English literature.

Masterworks Courses: Chronological reviews of limited numbers of masterpieces or master authors.

Advanced Composition: Expository writing, sometimes with attention to theories of composition and rhetoric.

Creative Writing: Practice in imaginative writing.

Literary Criticism: Studies in critical theory.

Almost all departments offer some courses which do not fit into these categories--courses in folklore, for example, or in semantics or in teaching methods--but most of their offerings above the freshman level are of these types. Classifying them in this manner makes it possible to determine how many departments teach how many courses of each common type. Table72 lists the types in order of relative frequency, then shows what percentage of all departments offer one or more units of each kind. (Because of the difficulty of translating credits from one calendar to another, "unit" is here taken to mean one term of work, whether that term be a semester, a trimester, or a quarter.) The first column of figures in this table helps to explain the apparent uniformity of college curriculums in English: it reveals that at least two-thirds of all departments offer at least one course in each of the categories we have defined (with the exception of the course in masterworks, which is often seen as an alternative to the survey course). Departments may disagree on how many courses of each type they should offer, but most of them try to ensure that all of the standard types will be represented in their curriculums. Thus their catalogue listings look much alike. Almost all contain a course in Shakespeare, some American literature, three or four genre courses, and several courses in the literature of separate periods (and almost all define those periods alike.)

But although there is much sameness in curriculums above the freshman level, they have not remained wholly unchanged during recent years. In particular, many of them have been expanded or modified to include more units of such non-literary subjects as linguistics, the history of the language, and advanced composition. An NCTE survey conducted by Harold B. Allen in 1960 found that only 28 percent of departments in four-year colleges and universities offered courses in modern English grammar and only 58 percent had courses in the history of the language: in 1968 almost 80 percent had courses in one or both of these subjects.[87] Another survey conducted in 1960 reported that one-third of these departments did not offer advanced composition; that figure has dropped to 27.8 percent.[88]

---

87 The National Interest and the Teaching of English, pp. 67, 68.

88 "Report on College Courses in Composition," Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board, as quoted ibid.

TABLE 72

The General Curriculum above the Freshman Level

Type of course	Percent offering course(s)	Number of units offered: One unit	Two units	Three units	Four units	Five units	Six units	Seven units	Eight units	Nine units	Ten or more units
Individual authors	95.6	23.1	31.9	20.9	8.0	5.1	3.3			1.2	1.5
American literature	94.1	19.0	49.4	13.6	5.1	3.3	2.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Genres	93.4	10.0	11.4	16.5	17.9	12.1	8.0	3.7	4.4	2.6	7.0
Periods	91.6	4.4	7.0	10.0	13.2	12.1	11.7	9.5	5.5	6.6	11.7
Linguistics	79.5	36.6	23.1	8.0	5.9	2.6	2.2				
Surveys (Eng. lit.)	78.4	11.4	45.8	11.7	6.6	1.1	1.1	0.4			0.4
Advanced composition	72.2	44.3	19.8	5.9	1.4	1.4					
Creative writing	71.1	37.7	17.6	8.4	3.3	1.5	1.1	1.1			
Literary criticism	67.0	48.4	13.9	1.1	2.2						
Masterworks	26.1	8.8	11.4	2.2	2.2		1.1		0.3		
Other	89.3	16.8	13.8	15.3	12.2	5.3	3.8	1.5	3.0	6.9	

The quality of many of these offerings may be questioned, because the number of teachers who are competent to conduct substantial courses in linguistics and rhetorical theory remains limited. Evidently most departments have decided, however, that a comprehensive curriculum should include courses of these types, whether or not they are heavily subscribed and properly taught.

The department's ability to supply courses of the several types depends in part on its size and the demand for English on its campus. Table 73 shows how many courses of each type departments of various sizes usually offer. (The figures are, once again, units of one-term courses of each type. Here, however, the upper and lower 25 percent have been subtracted to give the mid-range. Thus the range indicated always represents the offerings of at least 50 percent of the schools and, at times when the data concentrate around the few typical points, considerably more than 50 percent.) A close look at this array of figures yields some valuable insights. One is that the number and variety of courses offered does not increase in direct proportion to the size of the department: large departments may slice their subject matter into somewhat smaller portions--may offer more period, genre, and "other" courses, that is--but they do not offer many more courses of most of the standard types. A department which has eight members and which serves a student body of 1,000 may be expected to provide three courses in the works of individual authors, and so may a department which has twenty-eight members and serves a student body of 5,000. The large department may offer more sections of popular courses (depending on how large it allows its classes to become), but its battery of courses will not be much more diversified than that of the small department.

There is a limit to the number of survey (or masterworks) courses that need be offered, because such courses are designed to summarize the whole of English or American literature in a few terms. Most departments find that two units of this type are sufficient (although those which offer surveys of both English and American literature may have from four to six units in all). Courses of other types are limited by the demand or by the available competence of the staff. Few departments offer more than three units of advanced composition, of creative writing, or of literary criticism. Evidently it is felt that an adequate curriculum for undergraduates need include no more than a few one-term courses of each of these types.

From the data supplied in Table 73 it is also possible to derive a more or less accurate blueprint of the typical college curriculum in English above the freshman level. It will be remembered that just about half of all English departments have fewer than ten members. Thus it may be said that half the departments in the land are described by the first two columns of Table 73. Departments of this very common size are often found to present the following array of one-term courses for

TABLE 73

Size of Department and Number of Course Units Offered

Type of course	Full-time members					
	1-4 (n=49)	5-9 (n=88)	10-19 (n=62)	20-29 (n=36)	30-99 (n=40)	All departments (n=273)
Individual authors	1-2	1-3	2-3	2-4	2-5	1-2
American literature	1-2	1-2	2-3	2-4	2-4	1-2
Genres	1-3	2-5	2-6	4-7	4-9	2-5
Periods	1-4	3-6	4-8	4-10+	6-10+	3-7
Linguistics	0-1	1-2	1-2	1-3	2-4	1-2
Surveys (Eng. lit.)	1-2	0-2	2-3	2-3	1-3	1-2
Advanced composition	0-1	0-1	0-2	1-2	1-2	0-2
Creative writing	0-1	0-1	1-3	1-2	1-3	0-2
Literary criticism	0-1	0-1	0-1	1-2	1-2	0-1
Masterworks	0	0-1	0-1	0-2	0-1	0-1
Other	1-4	1-5	2-5	2-6	3-7	1-4

sophomores, juniors and seniors:

Two or three courses in the works of individual authors (usually Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton);

Two courses in American literature (usually two terms of a survey course which extends from colonial to modern literature);

Four courses in literary genres;

Four or five courses in the literature of separate periods (typically the Renaissance, the eighteenth century, the Victorian period, and the modern period);

One or two courses in linguistics or the history of the language;

Two terms of a survey or masterworks course;

One course in advanced composition;

One or two courses in creative writing (often a course in writing short stories and a course in writing poetry);

One course in literary criticism;

Three courses of other types (for example, world literature, the Bible as literature, or speech).

The curriculum in English offered at Lawrence University (which has 1,290 undergraduates, an English department of eight members, and a trimester calendar) illustrates this pattern almost exactly. In 1967-1968 it consists of the following courses (listed as they appeared in the catalogue);

Introduction to English Literature (masterworks; two terms)

Expository Writing (advanced composition)

Literary Forms and Types (practical criticism)

Public Speaking

Literary Composition (creative writing; two courses)

American Literature (survey; two terms)

Introduction to Shakespeare (non-majors)

Studies in Shakespeare (majors; two terms)

Milton and the Seventeenth Century

Chaucer and His World

Eighteenth Century Literature

The Romantic Movement

The Victorian Age

The English Novel

Renaissance Literature

Modern Fiction

Modern Poetry

The English Language

Literary Criticism

Introduction to Linguistics

Tutorial Study for Seniors (one or more terms)

Independent Study in English (honors projects)

This program represents a kind of epitome or paradigm of curriculums now offered across the nation. Very large departments may offer more individual courses (in 1968 the largest, at Illinois, had eighty-three to Lawrence's twenty-six), but most of these are refinements on basic types (for example, Illinois offers three separate courses in the English novel--English Novelists of the Eighteenth Century, English Novelists of the Nineteenth Century, and The Mid-Victorian Novel--to Lawrence's one). English departments, then, may enlarge their lists of courses as they themselves grow larger and serve more students, but they seldom add courses of wholly new types.

Teaching Procedures

Lawrence's entirely typical program serves to "cover" most of the subjects and bodies of literature English teachers have traditionally considered the prime matter of their discipline. It does not do much more than that. What renovation and innovation is accomplished must therefore be effected by individual teachers working within the confines of their conventional curriculum. Fortunately, teaching conditions at Lawrence--and at many other colleges and universities--still permit that fertile exchange of ideas and perceptions which may refresh even the most stereotyped course. Table 74 summarizes the teaching procedures which departments at institutions of all kinds employ in courses of the several

TABLE 74

Teaching Procedures

Types of Course	Lecture	Discussion	Lecture/ section	Lecture/ discussion	Varies	Other
Individual authors	15.5	21.6	1.2	58.4	20.0	
American literature	17.2	13.8	2.5	55.7	19.2	0.4
Genres	17.4	19.9	2.1	61.9	22.9	0.9
Periods	16.4	15.5	1.7	60.8	23.7	
Linguistics	18.4	16.2	1.0	49.8	21.9	0.5
Surveys (Eng. lit.)	15.9	11.4	8.0	53.0	21.3	
Advanced composition	3.2	36.3	3.2	33.0	31.3	3.9
Creative writing	2.2	40.2	1.1	27.8	27.9	5.5
Literary criticism	8.4	24.6	0.6	53.2	19.2	0.6
Masterworks	1.5	21.2		56.1	21.2	
Other	15.3	33.6	2.6	50.7	34.1	3.9

basic types; it shows that Lawrence's practice is common and that the great majority of departments provide opportunities for discussion in most of their courses. (Figures are percentages of all departments. Several have more than one course of each type and employ more than one procedure.) Straight lecture courses are least common: even such technical subjects as linguistics are taught by this method in less than one-fifth of all departments. Discussion groups are more common than lectures, but the most common method is some combination of both. It is impossible to tell just how much time is allotted to each; perhaps many of these courses include little more than a question period at the end of each class as a gesture towards discussion. The large lecture followed by sectioning into smaller discussion groups is not very common, unless that procedure is masked in the large percentage of courses which are said to be taught by a combination of lecture and discussion. In Table 75 methods used to teach courses on the works of individual authors are related to such variables as the size and types of the institution. The pattern is much the same for courses of other types.

It is not surprising that lecturing is more common in large institutions than in small, but the degree of difference is less than one might expect, and the incidence of lecture/discussion classes does not vary in direct proportion to size. Medium-sized private colleges seem to afford most opportunities for discussion in this and courses of other types. Perhaps this is because such institutions are still committed to a tradition of individual instruction and have large enough faculties to maintain that tradition.

Class Size

That teachers resort more and more to lecturing, without discussion, as classes grow larger is confirmed by Table 75. The average percentage of departments which conduct courses of any type by the lecture method alone never exceeds 19, however; no matter what the course, less than 20 percent of all departments teach it by lecturing. This heartening fact may be related to another, which some will find truly surprising: the most common undergraduate class above the freshman level is one which contains from 10 to 29 students. Large classes in English are quite uncommon: only 5.1 percent of all departments have any classes of over 75 students, and only 3.1 percent have any of over 100. Table 76, in which class sizes are related to several variables, show that larger institutions and larger departments do indeed have somewhat larger classes, but very few have many classes of over 40 students.[89]

---

[89] The figures at the top of each column in this table refer to enrollment modes. As explained earlier, the mode or most

TABLE 75

Procedures Used to Teach Courses in Individual Authors

Size of school	Lecture	Discussion	Lecture/ section	Lecture/ discussion	Varies
Small	9.2	22.9	1.5	58.0	24.4
Medium	20.0	22.9	2.9	62.9	17.1
Large	24.1	19.0		57.0	13.9
Type of school					
Public	16.3	18.5		57.6	17.4
Private	15.5	26.2	1.2	61.9	13.1
Sectarian	14.1	19.7	2.8	53.5	31.0
Size of department					
1-4 members	12.2	9.8	6.1	61.0	24.4
5-9 members	9.8	25.6		59.8	20.7
10-19 members	14.8	33.3		53.7	21.2
20-29 members	27.3	33.3		51.5	21.2
30 and above	22.8	8.6	2.8	65.7	8.6
Size of class (mode)					
1-9 students	16.7			66.6	16.7
10-19 students	13.2	28.6	2.2	53.9	24.2
20-29 students	12.4	21.0		61.7	19.8
30-39 students	22.4	16.3		53.1	16.3
40-49 students	30.0	10.0		90.0	10.0
ALL	15.5	21.6	1.2	58.4	20.0

TABLE 76

Typical Class Size

Size of school	1-9 students	10-19 students	20-29 students	30-39 students	40-49 students
Small	4.2	49.6	31.5	11.9	2.8
Medium		45.7	34.3	17.1	2.8
Large	1.2	13.8	37.5	40.0	7.5
Size of department					
1-4 members	8.5	57.4	25.5	6.4	2.1
5-9 members	1.2	47.0	34.1	15.3	2.4
10-19 members	1.7	37.9	39.6	17.2	3.4
20-29 members	3.0	21.2	33.3	33.3	9.1
30 and above		5.7	34.3	51.4	8.6
Type of school					
Public	3.1	24.7	34.0	33.0	5.2
Private	4.6	44.8	29.9	17.2	3.4
Sectarian		47.3	37.8	10.8	4.0
Location of school					
North Atlantic	2.7	38.4	31.5	19.1	8.2
Great Lakes & Plains	1.2	34.6	44.9	16.6	2.5
Southeast	7.8	37.3	27.5	23.5	3.9
West & Southwest		38.2	26.5	29.4	2.9
South Central		36.4	27.3	31.8	4.5
ALL	2.7	38.0	33.7	21.3	4.3

Note that many of the largest percentages (those which are italicized) are found in the second column: the class of fewer than 20 students is most often the most common! Indeed, one may say that at 38 percent of all institutions the typical class above the freshman level is no larger than the average section of freshman English. Large departments at large institutions do allow their classes for sophomores, juniors, and seniors to grow beyond the size of their classes for freshmen, but very few of them report that classes of from 40 to 49 students are most common on their campuses, and none reports that classes of over 50 are typical. Enrollment modes are slightly higher at public than at private and sectarian institutions, but again they are much lower than might be expected: 61.8 percent of all public schools report that their typical classes contain fewer than 30 students.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the small class, of course. It is costly, and, if the teacher's purpose is simply to impart information or explanation, it may be wasteful. The office of the English teacher, however, is not only to inform and to explain but also to initiate and to sustain an interchange of thought, feeling, and judgment. This he cannot do well in classes of over, say, 40 students. Larger classes inhibit students or make it impossible to entertain their responses at length. Administrators who argue that a few more students per class can't hurt should be reminded that it is difficult to discuss more than a sonnet an hour with a fully responsive class of 20. Not all students welcome such small classes; many would prefer to sit at the feet of a lecturer, happily filling their notebooks with received interpretations and evaluations. All but the most vain teachers of English know, however, that to indulge such students is to leave their job half undone. Not to worry their students into responses and to orchestrate their responses into something better than any one member of the group brought into the classroom would be like clapping with one hand. But if contact is to be made, both hands must be in proximity, and this can be accomplished only in small classes. Fortunately, these are still common on American campuses.

---

common number gives a better indication of typical class size than the average or mean. By determining what percentage of all departments in each category have each enrollment mode we can characterize the typical class at institutions of each size, type, and location. Thus, the figure "49.6" opposite "Small" and under "10-19" tells us that at just about half the schools with undergraduate enrollments of under 1,500 the most common class size is from 10 to 19 students. The mode itself would be subject to distortion if a department had a few very large classes which accounted for a large proportion of its total enrollment. This turns out not to be the case, however, and the mode remains an accurate picture of the undergraduate's experience in English courses.

Papers and Examinations

Most undergraduate courses in English afford opportunities for written as well as oral expression: at least one paper per term is required in about 95 percent of all courses, no matter what the type.[90] The number of essays or writings assigned may reach as high as ten in courses in advanced composition or in creative writing, but the most common practice is to require a single "term paper." Many teachers would now argue that this is bad practice. The writing assignments for an undergraduate course in English, they believe, should be conceived not as tests of the student's erudition or final "command of the subject" but as occasions for articulating his developing perceptions. They would prefer to assign a number of shorter papers throughout the term rather than a single climactic essay. This tendency towards refracting the writing required into smaller units distributed throughout the term seems consistent with that view of undergraduate study in English which sees it as a continuous activity rather than as a march toward some well-defined goal. Teachers of this persuasion think it less important that students make a "final" statement before leaving the course than that they remain verbally active while they are acquiring their understanding of the subject.

Some test of what the student has acquired is still considered necessary by most teachers, however, if only because they must submit grades at regular intervals. The hour examination at mid-term and the two-hour final remains the most common program of tests, the essay question the most common testing device. Happily, there does not seem to be any significant trend towards greater use of machine-graded examinations, despite their popularity elsewhere. Most English teachers are well aware that the essay test itself is a highly fallible instrument, and they have no desire to substitute even more dubious devices.

The undergraduates' essays and examination papers are usually read and evaluated by the teachers who have assigned them. Of all departments, 45.7 percent employ assistants to help in correcting papers and examinations, but their office is usually limited to checking students' prose for mechanical errors. (Two-thirds of those departments which rely on such assistance employ undergraduates--usually seniors majoring in English; the rest use graduate students or other members of the community.) Some departments assign assistants on the basis of enrollments: one "reader" may be provided for every thirty students over the normal enrollment. But fortunately such overpopulated classes are rare,

---

[90] Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that most departments recommend that at least one paper be assigned: the precise number required is usually left to the discretion of the instructor, and often the chairman himself cannot be sure how many are actually assigned.

and the practice of farming out the students' written work--a practice very few teachers or students find satisfactory--is not widespread.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

This description of the conditions under which English is taught to American undergraduates and of the procedures endorsed by most departments suggests that if the subject is taught badly it is probably the fault of individual instructors and their methods, not of institutions which oppress them. Most teachers continue to enjoy the luxury of small classes, most are encouraged by the policies and traditions of their departments to engage their students in discussion and to have them write. Some may charge that they are asked to teach too many classes and to read too many papers, others that conventional curriculums stifle innovation. But, except for these complaints--which should not, of course, be dismissed--there seem to be few occasions for blaming the state of instruction in English on external circumstances. The embarrassing truth is that most teachers of English probably get from their students just about what they deserve.

CHAPTER III

THE MAJOR IN ENGLISH

Somewhere between 6 and 10 percent of all undergraduates in the United States are majors in English; the average percentage among institutions of all sizes and kinds is 7.8. Table 77 reveals the extent to which the popularity of the major varies with the size, kind, and location of the school. The differences among these figures are not very large, but they indicate that the major in English is most popular at small colleges, at sectarian and private schools, at non-coeducational institutions (many of which are colleges for women), and at schools in the North Atlantic section of the nation. The same pattern is revealed when the percentages are computed in another way: a higher-than-average proportion of the total student body majors in English at about 40 percent of small schools as compared to about 18 percent of large, at about 40 percent of sectarian as compared to about 22 percent of public, at about 30 percent of non-coeducational as compared to about 22 percent of coeducational schools, and at about 40 percent of the schools in the North Atlantic states as compared to about 5 percent in the southeastern states.

The small percentage of the total undergraduate body which majors in English may be misleading. Among the many different majors now being offered, English is still one of the three most popular on three-quarters of the nation's campuses. At one-third of all institutions it is the most popular major, at another 20 percent it is the second most popular, and at 22 percent the third. Its chief rival varies from campus to campus and from year to year: it may be history, or the life sciences, or some other discipline, depending on local traditions, the popularity of individual faculty members, the social concerns of the moment, and other factors. Even at large schools which offer many choices, however, English remains enormously popular: it ranks first at 40 percent of institutions of this size. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that its popularity is on the wane; only 2 percent of all departments in schools of all sizes and kinds report a decrease in general enrollments and in number of majors during recent years. The fears of those who think they see a trend away from English and the humanities towards more practical or more glamorous disciplines do not seem to be justified.

The great majority of students who elect to concentrate in English are women. The average percentage of males among English majors at coeducational institutions is 31.5; that is, female majors

TABLE 77

Average Percent of Undergraduate Enrollment Majoring in English

Size of School	
Small	9.8
Medium	6.0
Large	5.9
Type of School	
Public	6.3
Private	7.4
Sectarian	10.8
Coed	7.2
Non-coed	9.6
Location of School	
North Atlantic	10.2
Great Lakes and Plains	7.5
West and Southwest	7.4
Southeast	7.1
South Central	4.1
ALL	7.8

in English outnumber males by over two to one. Even at such institutions as the University of Chicago, where the student body as a whole is predominantly male, over two-thirds of the majors in English are women. It is worth noting, however, that the opposite is true at most Canadian coeducational institutions. There the major in English usually attracts more men than women. This difference may be due in part to the fact that there is still no tradition of higher education for all qualified women in that country and therefore Canadian colleges and universities enroll many more men than women. But it also suggests that Canadian students may not subscribe so readily to the notion prevalent among Americans that English is a "sissy" discipline, fit only for females who intend to teach the young. That view (which may be more common in the Midwest and South than in other parts of the United States) continues to plague some English departments, which complain that their upper division classes are populated largely by docile young ladies who make dutiful but somewhat dull pupils. Members of these departments wish they could persuade more young men that their programs for the major in English may be just as challenging to the male intellect as the major in chemistry or economics.

Although they may lament the imbalanced distribution of the sexes among their majors, very few English departments now have cause to deplore their general quality. The majority (64.6 percent) of departments report that their programs for the major attract a representative group, including students of every competence; 31.9 percent say their majors are the most competent students at their institutions with a few exceptions; and 2.7 percent say they enlist the very best students and only them. No department rates its majors uniformly mediocre or inferior, and only 9.5 percent report that they are forced to lower standards to accommodate incompetents. Apparently the day is past when English served as a refuge for dilettantes, "gentlemen C" students, and those who had failed at other disciplines. Most teachers would agree with the chairman at Pomona, who said in an interview, "The college is getting better and better students, and we get our share of the best." On many campuses English is known as a "tough major": the department's standards are high and its requirements more rigorous than those of other departments. This serves to discourage most of the "non-committed" students who might otherwise seek in English an easy route to the degree. Not all of those who do enroll in its program for the major are fully committed when they begin, but most can muster a genuine interest in literature and are therefore worthy of the special attention they receive.

When The Major Is Declared

At 55.3 percent of all institutions students commit themselves to their major late in the second half of their sophomore year. The faculties of these colleges usually subscribe to the traditional belief that the student's first two years should be devoted to exploring a variety of disciplines and to developing new interests. This belief has recently been challenged at a number of institutions; now 22.9 percent

ask students to declare their majors at the end of the freshman year, and 16.8 percent require them to do so upon entering. Typical of the latter is the Washington Square College of New York University. There the faculty voted in 1964 to abandon an elaborate set of distribution requirements which obliged all students to take courses in almost every discipline before they were allowed to major. Now students declare their majors as soon as they arrive at the college. If they choose English, they become, in effect, apprentice majors or candidates for the major and are placed in special sections of freshman English (called "colloquia" and limited to twenty students per class). They must take two terms of this course, and if they receive Ds in both they are not allowed to continue in the program for the major. Members of the English department believe their new plan works well with the highly competent students the Washington Square College admits. Formerly, they say, their lower division students spent their first two years acquiring a smattering of many subjects; now they may proceed directly to the intensive study of those subjects which interest them most, and the freshman colloquia in English serve as "a way to find out early whether the student's interest can stand some strain." To English teachers at several other institutions (for example, at Swarthmore, which is as highly selective as N.Y.U.), it seems wholly mistaken to encourage, much less to demand, such early majoring. They fear overspecialization and parochialism as programs for the undergraduate major in English come to look more and more like programs of graduate studies. A compromise policy which many schools now endorse permits a few unusually well-qualified students of demonstrated dedication and ability to declare their majors early. Of all departments, 48.6 percent now allow such students (who are usually identified by their own requests and by outstanding work in their first term) to choose their majors in their freshman year, and most of them assign these precocious majors to counselors in the English department, who offer them special advice to ensure that the courses they take as sophomores will prepare them properly for concentration in English.

Admission Requirements. About 42 percent of departments impose no restrictions on admission to the major in English, accept all students who wish to enroll in their programs; 13.7 percent reserve the right to refuse admission at the discretion of the department and depend on their own ability to dissuade weak students. Another 12.8 percent rely on the reputation of the major to eliminate such students. Among those which have formal requirements, one or another grade point average, either in English or in all courses, is most common: 11.6 percent require a C average, 22.4 percent a C+. One department in Texas has deliberately lowered its barrier to C- because, as the chairman said, "We know that if they don't major with us they will major in education, and we think we can make better school teachers than the educationists can, no matter how bad the student." But if most English departments are inclined to entertain all students who profess a serious interest in their subject, it is probably not because they hope to save them from education or any other major but because members of these departments are aware that, as trustees of a discipline which is central to all humane studies, they have no right to exclude any who would partake of it. It is difficult to identify any special aptitude which is essential to success at the practice of this

discipline, and most English teachers have no desire to limit admission to their major to students of any one type. They would prefer to welcome a heterogeneous group and then to offer them a properly demanding--and rewarding--course of studies.

Programs for the Major

When they turned to describing programs for the major in English--specifically, which courses in literature were required by how many departments and at what levels--an earlier team of surveyors confessed their bewilderment.

> The number of course titles seems myriad; the ways of organizing materials are numerous indeed; and the changes and counterchanges are so numerous and seemingly so contradictory that it is hard to organize the body of data in a way that will display whatever meaning it contains.[1]

The components of such programs are not difficult to identify: as we have seen, most English courses above the freshman level can be classified as examples of ten basic types. These are the blocks of which the major is made, but it is amazing how many different structures are possible. One department will build its major on a foundation of survey courses, another will construct its program entirely of smaller units. One will insist on so many units of early literature, another will permit almost any combination of courses. Where to put the inevitable course in Shakespeare is a small but important question which divides departments: some require it in the sophomore year, others postpone it until the senior year. Often departments at very similar institutions are found to have very different programs, for reasons difficult to discern. Examples are Wesleyan and Dartmouth. Both are wealthy, highly selective New England colleges for men. They draw their students from the same secondary schools and, what is more important for this comparison, they recruit their faculty from the same graduate schools. Yet Wesleyan puts great emphasis on its survey courses, which are required of all majors, and Dartmouth will have none of such courses. Each is convinced its practices are correct and considers its plan for the major wholly appropriate. The many arguments for and against the survey course--all of which have been rehearsed on many occasions in meetings of each department--lead to fundamental questions about the study of literary history (see page 161 below), but such questions these nearly identical departments answer variously.

The great variety or confusion of programs for the major in English points to one of two conclusions: either departments of English have not

---

[1]Donald R. Tuttle and Helen O'Leary, Curriculum Patterns in English: Undergraduate Requirements for the English Major (Washington, 1965), p.40.

faced up to the task of deciding just what constitutes an essential plan of studies for undergraduates who would specialize in their discipline, or that decision cannot be made and that plan cannot be devised because their discipline cannot be defined. There have always been those who have thought that English teachers should be able to agree on what constitutes a proper set of courses for the major and therefore that some common program should be endorsed by most departments. In 1954 Thomas Clark Pollock wrote:

> The major should give the student the opportunity to concentrate on a carefully organized program of studies in the particular department he has chosen for his specialization. The emphasis should be on careful, thoughtful organization of the major program as distinct from a major program which is not carefully planned or is disorganized or haphazard. The major should lead somewhere.[2]

And more recently Wayne Booth has proposed a general reform of undergraduate programs which would correct the drift towards "nonprograms" he finds so prevalent. Booth's argument, which is presented in the chapter he contributed in 1965 to The College Teaching of English, assumes that consensus may be reached on which "skills departmental programs ought to develop," that "all worthwhile educational planning includes provision of sequences," and that it should be possible therefore "to design programs that will lead every student, regardless of his special field, to develop these skills."[3] He concedes that "English is an especially amorphous subject, requiring repeated efforts at definition . . . is, in fact, many subjects," and he recognizes "the hopelessness of attempts at coverage."[4] Nevertheless, his is essentially a monistic view, which presumes that there are good and bad programs, right and wrong teaching procedures, and a definable set of skills which can be developed and tested. Opposed to him are the pluralists, who are more impressed than he by the amplitude of English and the difficulty of containing it. "In an acknowledged discipline," wrote William Randel in 1958, "there is general consistency. English is prodigal, extravagant, inconsistent internally and externally."[5] Many of today's teachers are not at all sure that they know how to define "the skills that are really needed by the student of literature and language" (to quote Booth once again) and they doubt that

---

[2] "Should the English Major Be a Cafeteria?" College English, 15 (1954), 330.

[3] Pp. 203, 214, 202.

[4] Pp. 200, 202.

[5] "English as a Discipline," College English, 19 (1958), 360.

any one program, no matter how carefully devised, will inevitably lead to the acquisition of those skills. They are therefore more tolerant of variety and more inclined to leave the selection of courses to the individual student and his counselor.[6] Nowadays they may also be influenced by the students' increasing insistence on their right to be consulted in the planning of their own education. Finally, these teachers are not as deeply disturbed as Booth by what he calls "the scandal of determining completion of the major by an adding machine."[7] They know that the course of studies which constitutes the major must be of limited duration, and they are aware that its duration is most conveniently defined in terms of credit hours. But they do not suppose that they are turning out a finished product, and therefore the totting up of credits is, for them, merely an artificial formality, about which it is difficult to become exercised one way or another.

In 1963 Tuttle and O'Leary noted, with approbation, a trend "generally in the direction of more requirements and fewer electives," a tendency towards "greater specificity" in defining the contents of the major.[8] Today over 75 percent of all departments still retain some requirements for the major, but there is evidence to suggest that more and more of them will see fit to relax their requirements in the near future and that the pluralistic view of programs for the major will eventually prevail. Two examples will illustrate this trend towards liberalization and greater permissiveness. For many years previous to 1966 the English department at Brown University had required all its majors to take five one-semester "period" courses in chronological order. By this means the department assured itself that none of its majors would graduate without some knowledge of the principal episodes in the history of English literature. This plan was scrapped in 1966, however, because it was found to be no longer feasible (too much had to be packed into some of the courses) and because students were demanding a greater freedom of choice (in particular, they wanted to take more genre courses). Under the new program English majors at Brown were required to take eight one-semester courses (in addition to an introductory course in critical reading), and the department stipulated only that two of them must be in literature before 1700 and one must be in American literature before 1914.[9] In 1967 the English

---

[6] Majors in English are counseled by English teachers, not by professional counselors or others, on 94 percent of American campuses.

[7] The College Teaching of English, p. 207.

[8] Curriculum Patterns . . ., pp. 38, 60.

[9] In the spring of 1969, during the brief tenure of President Ray L. Heffner (himself an English teacher by profession), Brown revised its general curriculum and its academic policies to permit its students almost total freedom of choice. For example, they may now take all their courses on a "pass/fail" basis, receiving no grades at all.

department at Stanford revised its program in similar fashion: it had formerly required three survey courses, and this number was reduced to one; several other options were also introduced. A statement the department's Curriculum Committee submitted when the new plan was introduced succinctly expressed the concept of the major which prompted the change:

> The new proposal continues to recognize a basically historical organization of courses and provides that all periods be represented in a student's program. It does, however, steer a middle course between the present highly prescriptive major and one without specific requirements. . . . We think that [the student] and his adviser should have greater latitude than the present curriculum allows. The heart of the English major, we believe, is literary experience, not a specific body of knowledge per se. For this reason we try to allow genuine freedom of choice as it affects any specific course, while maintaining a general pattern of historical representation.

Increasing critical sophistication which leads to increasing uncertainty about just how the history of English literature should be taught (Was there, for example, a "Romantic period"?), increasing reluctance to impose an official view of the subject on their students, increasing inclination to encourage individual exploration--these and other motives have persuaded several departments to reconsider their programs for the major and to redesign them to permit wider latitude. Most important, these departments share the conviction that "the heart of the English major . . . is literary experience, not a specific body of knowledge," and they are determined not to erect artificial barriers to that experience.

Meanwhile most of them continue to prescribe at least part of their programs. Table 78 indicates what percentage of departments require courses of each type. From these figures it is possible to determine the frequency with which courses of certain kinds occur among requirements for the major at colleges and universities of different sizes and kinds. Perhaps because they can supervise their students more closely, departments at small, private colleges appear to be somewhat more permissive than those at schools of other sizes and kinds; they require fewer courses of specific types and permit more electives. Otherwise there is remarkable consistence among the institutions of different sizes and types as to how many departments require courses of each kind. But how little agreement there is on just which courses should be prescribed is revealed when the column of percentages on the right is analyzed. From 62 to 75 percent of all departments agree that the program for the major should include one or more survey courses, courses in individual authors (including Shakespeare), and courses in American literature, but beyond that there is little or no consensus. Only 39 percent require courses in linguistics or the history of the language, only 28 percent prescirbe courses in early British literature, and so on. It is not that departments have abandoned all requirements for the major but that they have very different notions about which courses are essential to an adequate program.

Table 79 comes about as close as any set of figures can to reducing this welter of programs to statistical description. It tells us how many

TABLE 78

Requirements for the Major in English (I)

Type of Course	Percent of departments offering	Small	Medium	Large	Public	Private	Sectarian	All
Survey	78.4	71.1	74.4	80.9	80.2	70.3	72.5	74.8
Individual authors	95.6	68.9	71.8	67.9	70.8	63.3	72.9	69.0
American literature	94.1	60.3	61.5	61.9	63.5	36.6	62.8	62.0
Linguistics	79.5	34.6	44.6	44.0	59.4	24.4	28.6	39.0
Period courses	91.6	36.8	35.9	45.8	37.9	37.4	40.0	39.0
Advanced composition	72.2	25.0	30.8	34.5	41.7	19.9	20.0	29.0
Early* British literature	74.4	23.7	28.2	33.3	26.0	21 1	35.7	28.0
Literary criticism	67.0	22.8	25.6	29.8	25.0	19.8	31.4	25.5
Genre courses	93.4	17.8	28.2	26.2	22.9	17.8	24.3	22.1
Creative writing	71.1	3.7	5.1	4.8	3.1	3.3	4.3	4.3
Other**	89.3	39.0	33.3	31.0	42.7	18.6	32.9	35.7
Electives		81.4	84.2	84.5	83.3	90.9	82.9	82.4

*Usually defined as before 1600.

**Includes world literature, speech, mythology, etc., none of which is required by more than 2.5 percent of all departments.

TABLE 79

Requirements for the Major in English (II)

Type of Course	Percent of departments Number of units required						Year in which required			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Any time
Survey	9.3	34.7	23.8	23.8	3.6	5.7	67.8	29.0	10.8	26.9
Individual authors	63.7	27.9	5.6	2.2	1.6	0	6.7	34.0	23.4	48.0
American literature	44.2	42.1	8.8	3.7	0	1.2	32.1	32.7	10.6	39.6
Linguistics	81.1	16.8	.9	1.9	0	0	11.8	29.7	25.7	44.5
Period courses	34.6	28.7	16.8	4.9	6.9	6.9	16.8	38.6	25.7	46.5
Advanced composition	91.6	6.6	1.3	0	0	0	27.0	32.4	13.5	36.4
Early British literature	65.5	31.0	8.6	1.7	0	3.4	12.5	30.5	18.0	48.6
Literary criticism	74.6	16.4	2.9	1.4	1.4	0	38.8	22.4	26.8	28.4
Genre courses	65.5	31.0	8.6	1.7	0	3.4	39.6	24.1	20.6	37.9
Creative writing	83.3	8.3	0	8.3	0	0	8.3	41.6	24.9	49.8
Other	39.7	39.7	7.5	6.4	1.1	3.2	57.0	20.4	18.3	23.6
Electives	17.7	24.0	16.3	17.0	17.7	29.5	5.0	11.3	23.6	77.3

units are required by those departments which see fit to prescribe courses of each type. It also tells whether or not the courses must be taken at a certain stage in the program for the major. By reading both halves of this table, one may learn how many departments require how much of each study and at what level. From the mass of statistics in this table, the following generalizations may be derived:

1. When departments require courses of certain types, they usually require only one unit of each type. (The only exception is the survey, at least two units of which are required by most departments.) The table reveals, for example, that 69 percent of all departments require the separate study of individual authors, but almost two-thirds of those which do so prescribe only one such course (which is usually the course in Shakespeare). The number of electives most frequently required is six.

2. Most departments do stipulate when the courses they require should be taken, but, except for the survey and courses not classified here (that is, "other" courses such as world literature), there is little agreement among them as to which courses should be taken when. About 30 percent of those which require a course in linguistics, for example, insist that it be taken in the major's junior year; another 25 percent prescribe the senior year, and yet another 45 percent say it may be taken any time. Wayne Booth asserts, with enviable assurance, that "nobody has ever seriously doubted that we learn best when the hurdles to be leapt are placed in some sort of reasonable order," but even he must admit, a few pages later, that because "our waters are murky" "we can hope only to develop a variety of sequences that make sense in different settings."[10] Apparently that is just what departments throughout the nation have been doing for many years. Some are convinced that the course in Shakespeare should be taken early in the major's career, immediately after he has learned to read with critical insight; others believe in reserving the best for the last and therefore have their majors take their Shakespeare in their senior year. Good arguments can be advanced for both procedures, and it is difficult to see that one sequence makes better sense than the other. If it were possible to define the educational experience afforded by each course (and to each student) and if it were known which sequence of experiences would inevitably conduct students to the competence and knowledge an English major should have (and if those virtues could be defined), it would no doubt be possible to design an ideal program which all good departments should adopt. But every one of these matters is murky indeed, so murky as to be almost unfathomable, and therefore departments can do little more than "place the hurdles" in an order which seems reasonable to them and proper for their students. When he describes an actual program which meets his own specifications, Booth tells us that it includes the study of "English literature from 1600-1830," to which he quickly adds, "The sequence could cover any historical period, short or long, or it could deal with the

---

[10] The College Teaching of English, pp. 214, 216.

major writers of all periods, or indeed with any reasonable pattern of types or authors or periods or problems."[11] If the choice of courses to be required is as arbitrary as this statement implies, it is no wonder that departments choose so variously.

Courses for Sophomores Who Plan to Major in English. It is only with regard to sophomores who intend to specialize in English that departments approach something like consensus: 78.6 percent of them continue to hold that, having emerged from freshman English (which usually includes an introduction to the critical reading of literature), students who are headed for the major in English should begin to acquire a summary knowledge of the history of literature. Only 6.4 percent are opposed to such generalized study, 9 percent want their sophomores to combine generalized and specialized study, and 5.5 percent make other suggestions. Table 80 shows the consequences of these policies. It reveals that an overwhelming majority of all departments recommend surveys--of English or American or world literature--as appropriate courses for sophomores who plan to major in English. (Percentages are of all departments. A few indicated which courses they prefer but did not say whether they advise or require[12] such courses.) It is clear, then, that the survey

TABLE 80

Courses for Sophomores Who Plan to Major in English

Type of Course	Percent of depts. listing	Advised	Required
Survey	59.6	12.2	47.0
American literature	34.4	15.4	18.6
World literature	21.3	6.7	13.8
Advanced composition	13.3	6.3	9.1
Introduction to literature	13.1	2.3	9.9
Genre courses	12.3	5.5	7.1
Period courses	11.1	5.5	5.1

(continued)

[11] P. 216.

[12] If it be asked how students can be required to take certain courses in their sophomore year when they do not declare their major until the end of that year, the answer seems to be, in the words of one chairman, "The department urges all those who think they may want to major in English to take the required courses. If they don't but still seem good bets for the major, we may fudge the requirements." In effect, then, early majoring may be more common than departments like to admit.

TABLE 80 (continued)

Type of Course	Percent of depts. listing	Advised	Required
Shakespeare	9.1	5.1	4.0
Linguistics	6.7	3.2	3.6
Speech	2.4	1.2	1.0
Other	13.8	9.5	4.0

of English literature--which may be the most difficult of all English courses to teach well--remains a staple of the undergraduate curriculum: 78.4 percent of departments offer it, 59.6 commend it to prospective majors. Its worth, even its validity have been debated for decades. "Those who hold that the historical survey has no place in the sophomore course offer two reasons for their belief," wrote Harlan W. Hamilton in 1954. "They argue that the survey is superficial and that it is too much concerned with non-literary matters."[13] They may also argue that it misrepresents the literature by offering students only selections or snippets and that it kills their appetite for rigorous, intensive historical study by presenting oversimplified and canned interpretations of literary history. In response to these objections many departments have modified their survey courses to permit more intensive discussion of certain key works. Hoyt Trowbridge attributes this trend to the influence of the New Criticism.

> I.A. Richards suggested in Practical Criticism that some of the time devoted to extensive reading might profitably be made available for direct training in literary interpretation. Whether influenced by Richards or by their own experience in teaching, many departments of English in American colleges have made room for such training within the traditional survey course by shortening its chronological scope, limiting the works studied chiefly to those by major authors, or otherwise reducing the total amount of material to be covered.[14]

The logical conclusion to this reform is to convert the survey course into a course in masterworks, and as we have seen 26.1 percent of all departments have done just that. Others have tried to improve the historical survey in other ways. At the University of Virginia supplementary courses in the works of individual authors or in single recurrent themes are designed to enable majors to study in depth what the survey course has touched on briefly. And at Wellesley College the survey has been replaced by a genre course, "Poetry in Three Ages: Renaissance, Neo-Classic and Romantic," with the proviso that "this course should be fully committed to teaching historical perspective as well as close reading." This change was made, principally, because many Wellesley

---

[13] "Current Trends in the English Major," College English, 15 (1954), 342.

[14] "Introductory Literature Courses," The College Teaching of English, P.45.

students had complained that they were required to devote too much of their programs to elementary and cursory studies; they wanted to proceed more rapidly to more challenging studies of problems in literary history and of the works of individual authors. English majors throughout the country expressed the same inclination in interviews. Properly skeptical of the validity of generalizations handed them in the survey course, they asked for more opportunities to derive their own interpretations directly from primary materials--even if this meant that they must remain ignorant of whole periods or bodies of literature. A new breed of students, whose motives for majoring in English include an almost compulsive desire to find meaning for themselves and by themselves, may persuade more and more departments to reconsider the value of the one course they now consider all but indispensable.

The Amount of English Required or Permitted

Tuttle and O'Leary found in 1963 that about 27 percent of the English major's total program, throughout his four years as an undergraduate, was devoted to English. The figure has not changed much in succeeding years. At institutions which have the semester calendar (77.5 percent) and at which students normally take five courses each term, a total of 120 credits is usually required for graduation. The average number of credit hours in English above the freshman level required for the major at these schools is 29. If 6 credits for freshman English are added, the total comes to 35 or about 29 percent of the full quota required for graduation. An average 42.1 credits in English is required for the major at schools which have the quarter calendar and an average of 28.3 at those which have the trimester calendar. The general average among all schools is 37.6, but this figure is not very significant because the meaning of the term "credit" varies so much from school to school.[15] Table 81 lists the number of courses and credits required for the major by departments at several institutions of different sizes and kinds with calendars of the three most common types. Once again considerable diversity is revealed. The program for the major in English at the University of Kentucky is typical of many. That institution has the semester calendar, and students normally carry a course load of 15 hours per term. To graduate as majors in English they must complete eight courses and acquire 24 credits in their field of concentration. The following courses are required. (The percentages are those first presented in Table 79, which indicate how many departments of all sizes and kinds require courses of the kind Kentucky prescribes and thus how common its requirements are.)

---

[15] It would require an elaborate computation of evidence difficult to quantify to answer that most important question, "How much of his total academic life does the junior or senior majoring in English devote to his field of concentration?" The total amount might exceed 70 percent.

TABLE 81

Typical Requirements for the Major

	Number of one-term courses required	Number of credits required
Semester Calendars		
Augustana College	8	24
Brown University	8	24
DePauw University	9	36
Duke University	8	24
Haverford College	11	*
Indiana University	9	26
University of Kentucky	8	24
Kenyon College	12	36
Marquette University	11	33
Mills College	10	*
University of Nebraska	10	30
Oberlin College	12	36
Pomona College	6	*
University of Southwestern Louisiana	11	31
Swarthmore College	8	24
University of Texas	10	30
Wheaton College (Mass.)	10	*
Yale University	12	36
Quarter Calendars		
University of California, Berkeley	9	45
University of Chicago	12	*
Stanford University	9	45
University of Washington	10	50
Trimester Calendars		
Beloit College	8	32
Dartmouth College	10	*
Lawrence University	10	*

*Requirements not defined in credits.

Two one-term courses in the survey of English literature (74.8 percent)

One one-term course in the works of an individual author (69 percent)

One one-term course in American literature (62 percent)

One one-term genre course (22.1 percent)

Three one-term elective courses (82.4 percent)

This set of minimum requirements may be considered a norm, if it be remembered that there is little normalcy among programs for the major in English.

But these are minimum requirements, and most majors take more than the minimum. At Swarthmore, for example, a minimum of eight courses is required, but many students take 12; at Oberlin 36 credits are required, but many accumulate 42. Fearing that some undergraduates, if given perfect freedom of choice, might devote too much of their total programs to English and thus neglect their general education, over a third of all departments (34.9 percent) prescribe a maximum number of courses in English which majors may take. Of those which set such limits about a third will not permit more than 12 courses, about a quarter more than 14, about 30 percent 16, and about 7 percent some other number. At Swarthmore the maximum allowed is 13 courses; at Oberlin the major may proceed to take courses in excess of the 36 credits required only after he has acquired the 120 credits needed for graduation, and then the limit is 45 credits in his field of concentration. Often these restrictions are prescribed by the college as a whole; sometimes they are imposed by the department itself. In every case they are designed (like the provision for "pass/fail" courses which has recently become so popular) to encourage the student to venture outside his area of greatest interest and competence and thus to discourage overspecialization.

Many departments are sensitive to the charge that their programs for the major violate the principles of liberal education by demanding too much specialized study. Among those who have made this accusation is Harold Martin, one of the profession's ablest critics because he was one of its most distinguished members before he became president of Union College. Addressing a meeting of department chairmen, Martin asked them to imagine a hypothetical situation:

> Consider for a moment what an English department's "principal concerns" would be if no one were needed to teach English. What would be left of the present undergraduate major or of graduate study? The question is entirely serious, and any serious answer, I think, will reveal at least that professionalism--specialism, willy-nilly--now dominates both. English departments prize most those students who most handsomely fulfill professional

> expectations. . . . .It is senseless, I think, to quarrel with the logic of this patronage, but it is also foolish to overlook the premises for it. The truth is that English teachers, for school and college, are needed, and English departments feel an obligation to produce them. The "primary concerns" of their major and graduate programs are to do exactly that.[16]

To this indictment the departments might respond as follows: First, that they do not deliberately and formally distinguish between those undergraduates who plan to become college teachers (that is, those who intend to go on to graduate work) and those who do not; 75.9 percent of all departments say they make no such distinction, and 70.3 percent say that the need to prepare some students for graduate work does not influence their programs for the major in any significant ways.[17] Second, that the number of majors who actually go to graduate school is so small that the "primary concern" of English departments cannot be to produce college teachers of English. Throughout the nation the average percentage of English majors who subsequently do graduate work in this field is 24.9. In other words, only a quarter of all students who major in English are inspired to become college teachers of that subject. (Table 82 shows that this number varies with the size and geographical location of the undergraduate institution. It does not vary significantly among institutions of different kinds, among coeducational and non-coeduational schools, or among those which have graduate programs and those which do not.) The chairman of the English department at one prestigious

TABLE 82

Undergraduate English Majors Who Go to Graduate School

Size of institution	Percent
Small	27.7
Medium	22.7
Large	24.5

(continued)

[16] "A College President Speaks Out," ADE Bulletin, 15 (1967), 19.

[17] Those departments which do identify majors who plan to enter graduate school usually offer them special counseling and little more. Only 12.1 percent of all departments offer special courses designed to prepare students for graduate work; only 6.3 percent provide special tracks of regular courses. This is the extent to which the need to coach such students influences undergraduate programs directly.

TABLE 82 (continued)

Size of institution	Percent
North Atlantic	33.2
South Central	26.9
West and Southwest	24.3
Great Lakes and Plains	21.6
Southeast	21.2

eastern university summed up his opinions this way: "If our four or five best majors each year enrolled in our graduate program, we would really have a fine program. But they don't. Most of them go into law or medicine, and I'm glad they do. We want to do more than reproduce our own kind."

Finally, departments might point out that it is very difficult to define and to measure overspecialization. Is the teacher overspecializing when he devotes three class periods to a single scene in Shakespeare? Obviously the answer depends on how much meaning he can find in the text and what kinds of meaning he reveals to his students. The very titles of some undergraduate courses offered by some departments (especially those at very large universities) may seem prima facie evidence of excessive specialization: thus the department at the University of Illinois lists "Spenser and His Contemporaries," "Mark Twain and the Rise of Realism," and "Popular Ballads and Folk Songs in the United States." But the study of any one of these subjects may lead to discussion of fundamental, universal issues rather than to mere professionalism or pendantry.[18] As reported earlier, a majority of departments (53.4 percent) now look for teachers of general ability, not for specialists, when they recruit new members, and once they are hired many instructors are invited or required to teach courses well outside their areas of graduate specialization. These and other circumstances may help to prevent overspecialization, which most English teachers would probably condemn as heartily as their critics--if only they could be sure just what it is.

Other Requirements for the Major: 1. Foreign Languages. Students who major in English must meet foreign languages requirements at 81.4 percent of all colleges and universities. At about two-thirds of these institutions the requirements are college-wide or the same for all majors; at the rest they are prescribed by the English department for its majors alone. As Table 83 indicates, the most common requirement is two years of college work in a single foreign language or the equivalent of such work. It appears that sectarian schools are most likely to require command of a foreign language and that schools in the South Central and North Atlantic sections of the nation

---

[18] Furthermore, courses of this kind account for only a very small portion of the total effort devoted to the major. Illinois has about 410 majors in English (and 550 teacher training majors), but the average annual enrollment in each of these courses is about 16.

TABLE 83

Foreign Language Requirements for the Major

Type of Institution	Have requirement	2 years	1½ years	1 year	Reading knowledge	Other
Public	73.1	63.4	2.2	6.4	3.2	2.2
Private	82.4	60.0	4.8	13.0	3.6	3.5
Sectarian	91.3	56.5	2.9	13.1	8.7	10.1
Location						
South Central	94.5	77.3	4.5	14.5	0	4.5
North Atlantic	92.6	70.6	1.5	13.3	5.9	4.4
Southeast	89.4	65.9	6.4	10.7	2.1	6.4
Great Lakes & Plains	71.4	50.7	0	9.1	7.8	6.5
West & Southwest	61.3	39.8	9.7	6.5	3.2	0
ALL:	81.4	60.4	3.2	10.5	4.8	4.9

are more likely than others to do so. Most departments justify their requirements on the ground that familiarity with a foreign language will enhance the student's sensitivity to his own language, not on the ground that he needs to be prepared to read foreign texts in the original.

2. The Senior Thesis. The question of whether all majors in English should be required to write a lengthy essay or undergraduate thesis before they graduate is answered for departments at most large institutions: they cannot maintain such a requirement simply because they have too many majors and not enough teachers to direct and read the theses. Table 84 confirms this fact: it reveals that the senior thesis is not at all common and that it is almost never required by departments at large universities.

TABLE 84

Senior Thesis Requirement for the Major

Size of institution	Percent requiring thesis
Small	12.4
Medium	10.5
Large	2.4

(continued)

TABLE 84 (continued)

Type of institution	Percent requiring thesis
Public	4.4
Private	6.4
Sectarian	16.6
ALL	9.2

Figures in this table are bound to prove distressing to Wayne Booth, who sees the senior thesis as "the most important achievement" in the major's undergraduate career. In the course of defending this requirement he rehearses the two most common arguments against it: that "teachers just don't have time to supervise such work" and that "students are not up to it."[19] To the first he answers, "Why do the overworked departments find it impossible to turn over some of the responsibility to the students? Why not cancel half of the required course work and use the saving in staff time to provide supervision for independent projects?" To the second, "If four years of course work, two of them primarily under the English department, do not produce students who are able to approach a literary or linguistic problem on their own and write a literate account of their conclusions, then surely the answer is not to dodge the embarrassing test of our failure but rather to consider the causes and remove them."[20] But there is another fact which Booth does not seriously consider: that many undergraduates--including some of the most competent--are simply not ready to make an extended statement, even when they reach their senior year. For many of them further coursework, demanding as it usually does a number of shorter papers, may have greater educational benefit than the struggle to eke out a thesis (a struggle which is sometimes won only by their faculty advisor's lending undue assistance--in effect, writing the thesis with them). For the student who happens to find just the right topic--one which engages his strongest interests and which enables him to collect and relate much of what he has learned--the senior thesis may indeed prove a dramatic conclusion to four years of college work. But for most others it becomes just another chore, just another artificial hurdle to be cleared. Several departments with graduate programs in English (notably those at Rutgers and at Johns Hopkins) have recently revised their programs for the Ph.D. to permit candidates to submit a collection of essays in lieu of the traditional doctoral dissertation; others may wish to follow their example at the undergraduate level by modifying their regulation that all English majors must write a senior thesis.

3. Independent Study. It was about fifteen years ago that colleges began to see that they might allow some students to learn by themselves, with little faculty guidance. Now 73.1 percent make some provision for

---

[19] The College Teaching of English, pp. 210, 216.

[20] P. 211.

independent study. Only a very few (2.1 percent) require it of all majors, but many encourage them to undertake it. Table 85 summarizes nationwide policies and procedures with regard to independent study. (Some institutions follow more than one procedure.) The most common practice is simply to announce that independent study is available to those who qualify for it (and who can persuade faculty members to supervise their projects); about one-third of all departments follow this procedure. Another quarter reserve independent study for honors students, and the rest provide for it in other ways.

Many departments have instituted independent study programs in the hope that they might alleviate the faculty's teaching load and thus allow it to improve its other programs. But this seldom occurs. At institutions where independent study has become popular it has often proved very costly of faculty time and energies. A member of the English department at Colby College recently asserted that "the most expensive program we ever devised is independent study." The reason seems to be that such study can never be wholly independent and that students who are granted this privilege often become as dependent as tutees, demanding a great deal of individual attention. If twenty students are permitted to study independently, one less class may be needed. But the department may find to its dismay that it has, in effect,assumed the burden of twenty tutorials.

Moreover, the feasibility and educational value of independent study have been questioned by some departments which have tried it. In 1966 the English department at Wellesley College revised its plan for the major to include six weeks of independent study in the junior year. Their aim was to urge their highly competent students to pursue their own interests and to make their own discoveries. Two years later the department was forced to admit that very few majors were making good use of the time set aside for independent study. Wellesley's experience confirms what others have found: that, for those rare students whose curiosity has led them into realms not covered by the regular curriculum, independent study may be wholly appropriate, almost necessary (and therefore some provision for it should certainly be made), but that to require it of all students is probably a mistake.

Courses for Seniors

A small number of departments (5.7 percent of the total) provide special courses which are required of all seniors majoring in English. Indiana's catalogue description of its "senior seminars" characterizes most of these culminating courses: each seminar is devoted to "a thorough study of one or more major British or American writers or of one significant theme in English and American literature." The primary purpose of these courses is not to "fill gaps" but to ensure that all majors will have some experience of intensive study before they graduate. Students of English at Yale, for example, are likely to find themselves in large classes during their sophomore and junior years, but to complete the program for the major they must take a full year of "discussion courses," each of which has a

TABLE 85

Independent Study for the Major

Size of Institution	Permit independent study	By special arrangement	As part of honors program	Seniors only	As part of regular courses	If no course offered	Other
Small	73.6	34.3	24.3	11.4	10.0	10.8	15.7
Medium	68.4	3.2	28.9	10.5	7.9	7.9	15.8
Large	74.6	35.4	31.7	9.8	4.9	4.9	8.5
Type of Institution							
Public	71.1	27.8	30.9	7.2	7.2	7.2	9.3
Private	75.3	38.2	24.7	14.6	10.1	4.5	13.5
Sectarian	73.0	37.8	25.7	10.8	6.8	9.5	19.0
ALL	73.1	34.2	27.3	10.7	8.1	6.9	13.5

limited focus and a limited enrollment. At Swarthmore two seminars of this kind are prescribed for seniors in the regular program: one in Shakespeare and the other in "Problems of Literary Study." The "problems" which may be addressed in the latter are so numerous that the course may be used as a testing ground for innovations in teaching or for new explorations of old subject matter. Most departments would like to leave some room in their curriculum for such experimentation, and senior seminars of this kind (like the freshman seminars described earlier) may serve the double function of encouraging fresh teaching and of affording majors a final chance to study in depth.

The Comprehensive Examination

"Why, they could graduate as majors in English without having heard of 'In Memoriam,' or the pathetic fallacy, or Adelaide Crapsey!" Sooner or later this lament, or some version of it, is heard whenever departments meet to discuss the adequacy of their programs for the major. It is a source of great concern to some members of the profession[21] that every year degrees are awarded to students whose knowledge of English and American literature remains sadly imperfect despite the eight or ten courses each has taken as a major in this field. Some device must be found, these teachers feel, to certify the major's command of his discipline, and no device seems more logical than a comprehensive examination which will test both his erudition and his competence as a critic. According to Wayne Booth, this final trial should elicit from the student "one supreme effort" and should not only prove his right to the degree but should also prevent "the anticlimax experienced by the student who simply completes the right number of courses."[22]

It would appear, however, that the great majority of departments throughout the nation either cannot or will not institute such an examination. Only 25.3 percent of all departments now require the comprehensive, and most of these are small. Table 86 shows how many institutions of various sizes and kinds maintain this requirement. Just as they are unable, for lack of

---

[21] Not all of whom are senior professors or members of an old guard. Several department chairmen report that it is the young teachers, fresh out of graduate school, who are most likely to insist that undergraduate majors should acquire a sufficient store of the lumber of literary scholarship before they are granted the B.A. Having recently crammed for their Ph.D. examinations, they are inclined to place a high value on their newly acquired knowledge and to forget how ignorant they themselves were even as graduating seniors.

[22] P. 206.

TABLE 86

Departments Requiring Comprehensive Examination

Size of Institution	Percent
Small	40.5
Medium	15.4
Large	5.8
Type of Institution	
Public	9.0
Private	30.8
Sectarian	41.9
ALL	25.3

manpower, to supervise and to evaluate the large number of senior theses their majors would produce if each were required to write one, so departments in large institutions cannot administer a comprehensive examination. A case in point is the department at Cornell University, which abandoned this requirement several years ago when its corps of majors grew to such size that it became impossible to read the bluebooks they filled; now that department sets a comprehensive examination only for its honor students (and that is of modified form, as explained below). Duke and the University of Nebraska have eliminated the comprehensive for the same reason. Indeed, only 3.4 percent of all English departments which have over 150 majors (at all levels) retain the comprehensive, and one may assume that, for all practical purposes, that number becomes the cutoff point beyond which the requirement is no longer feasible.

At Reed College and a few others the comprehensive is taken in the junior year and becomes a kind of qualifying examination for the major; at the University of Chicago and the University of Virginia majors must take two examinations, a test of factual knowledge in the junior year and a test of critical ability in the senior year. At the great majority of institutions which retain the comprehensive, however, the examination is taken near the end of the student's senior year. In most instances his fellow seniors majoring in other fields must also take comprehensives: the requirement is college-wide at 51 percent of all schools at which it is maintained. Several departments declare that they continue to require the comprehensive "only because we have to"--that is, because it would be difficult or impossible to persuade the faculty as a whole to abandon the requirement.

A six-hour comprehensive is the most common: 40.6 percent of all comprehensives are of this length, 26.6 percent are of three hour duration, and 32.8 percent

are of some other length. At 57.7 percent of those schools which retain the test, the English department issues a syllabus or list of works to be covered in it. Usually the lists read much like the tables of contents of the standard anthologies of English and American literature, with whole novels and plays added; some departments merely refer their majors to such anthologies. The examination itself may consist of an "objective" section, designed to test rote knowledge, several "spot passage" or identification questions, and several essay questions, most of which require the student to compare works from different periods and bodies of literature. A few departments substitute the Graduate Record Examination for all or part of their comprehensive. That test, which is now graded electronically and is therefore limited to multiple-choice questions,[23] can only determine whether or not the student has the "right" answer, cannot acknowledge and reward original perception. Its serious inadequacy was recently pointed up by one of its critics, who wrote, "The multiple-choice test assumes that the important question is what is the right answer; whereas the real question is why is one of the answers superior to the others?"[24] In the opinion of some, the present GRE in English is a caricature of all examinations which attempt to reduce British and American literature to a tidy, testable subject.

In an effort to encourage freer, more direct, and more personal responses to their questions, 9 percent of all departments include an oral examination, usually of one hour. A very few enlist the services of outside examiners, eminent teachers from other schools who visit the host campus for a day or two to examine candidates orally or to read responses to written examinations they have set. Some teachers doubt the value of this (rather costly) procedure, because they observe that the visitors are seldom sure of exactly what the examinees have studied and are therefore unusually lenient out of courtesy and uncertainty. Others--notably faculty members at Swarthmore and the University of Rochester (where the outsiders examine only honors students, it should be said)--are confident that no other method serves the purposes of the comprehensive as well. Students prepare to answer not just the favorite questions of the local faculty but questions any first-rate scholar might ask. This, in turn, frees the faculty from coaching its students for its own examination, with the slight hypocrisy that that entails. Furthermore, the students and the faculty have an opportunity to meet and talk with their distinguished guests.

The great value of the comprehensive examination, in the opinion of those who advocate this institution, is that it encourages (or forces) students to read works not covered in their regular courses, to fill in their knowledge of literary history, and to achieve something like an overview of their subject. If the examination is well planned, it should enable

---

[23] In 1969 the Educational Testing Service began to offer a modified version of the Graduate Record Examination as part of its new Undergraduate Program. Called "The Undergraduate Record: Literature Test," this nationally administered examination is specifically intended to be used as a comprehensive. Eventually it will contain essay questions.

[24] Randolph H. Hudson, "The Graduate Record Examination: A Minority Statement and a Prediction," ADE Bulletin, 20 (1969), 50.

students to draw on the fund of knowledge and insights they have accumulated during their years as majors, to perceive and define interrelationships among disparate or distant works, and thus to transcend the fragmentation which results from the course system. The department may liberalize its program for the major and permit more options, it is argued, if it can be certain that all its majors must familiarize themselves with the main corpus of British and American literature in preparation for the comprehensive. For these and other reasons some members of the profession continue to endorse this requirement; Wayne Booth is even willing to say that "the lack of a comprehensive is one of the surest signs of an ill-designed program" and that "almost any comprehensive is better than nothing."[25]

Others who have had just as much experience with these examinations as he are not so sure of their worth as testing, much less as educational devices. They point out that the comprehensive can never be truly comprehensive, because undergraduates cannot--and probably should not--be expected to know all there is to know about their subject. The most that can be demanded of most of them is a superficial knowledge of the principal figures in the history of British and American literature and some ability to find meaning in works they have time to read and compare. Recognizing this fact, several departments have abandoned all pretense that their final examination is a "comprehensive" and have converted it to a set-book test of critical skills. Thus, candidates for honors at Cornell University take three two-and-a-half-hour examinations, each of which is devoted to a single work which has been identified well in advance. (One year the works consisted of a play by Shakespeare, a poem by Pope, and a novel by George Eliot.) And at Pomona the following announcement was distributed to all majors:

> Beginning with the class of 1968, a new type of Comprehensive Examination for English majors will be given. Instead of asking seniors to spend most of their time writing on a large field (i.e., all of English literature) which no one will be able to know thoroughly, students will be offered a choice of special fields which they can know well. The General Reading List is considerably shortened, and special field reading lists will be available for students to choose. In addition, each year a single book, or work of literature, will be set by the Department for intensive study.

To redefine the concept of the final examination in this way is not only to acknowledge, once again, the impossibility of containing "English" but also to affirm the department's belief that the ability to discuss a limited topic well is of greater value than the ability to drop names and dates.

Many departments report, however, that even their most carefully designed examinations produce only mediocre results. Each year, they say, they are embarrassed to read the bluebooks of seniors they will soon discharge as certified "experts" in English. And discharge them they will, because almost no one is prevented from graduating by the comprehensive examination. At a majority (54.7 percent) of schools which retain it, the incidence of failure on the comprehensive is less than 4 percent; at several schools no

---

[25] Pp. 206, 207.

student has failed in many years. Those few who do are usually allowed to take the examination again or to qualify for graduation in some other way. Thus, it could be argued that the comprehensive examination is not only not comprehensive but also not an examination, since it does not discriminate among those who take it. The English majors themselves are well aware, of course, that they are being asked to take a non-test, to clear a hurdle which trips almost none of the runners, and their somewhat cynical attitude towards the comprehensive may be attributed to their awareness of this fact. "We know we are going to pass," said one senior at Kenyon. "Any student who gets this far as an English major is bound to pass." This, in turn, may account for the dull, perfunctory answers their teachers must read. No doubt those students who prepare conscientiously for the examination derive educational benefits from the exercise. For too many, however, it becomes merely a final initiation rite, which they suffer because they know it means so little.

Honors Programs

At about two-thirds of all colleges and universities the regular program for the major in English is supplemented by an honors program designed to provide the most capable students with opportunities for more intensive study in close consultation with members of the faculty. Obviously, there is greater need for such programs at large schools than at small, especially if the latter are highly selective; as the chairman at one such college said (with some exaggeration), "All our majors are honors students." And in fact the incidence of honors programs does vary greatly with the size of the institution. As Table 87 shows, 80 percent of large schools offer honors programs of one kind or another, as compared with 75 percent of medium-size schools and only 54 percent of small schools. Half of these are departmental programs, 27 percent are college-wide programs, and the rest some combination of both.

TABLE 87

Honors Programs

Size of institution	No honors program	Departmental program only	College-wide program only	Departmental and college-wide program
Small	46.0	30.9	13.7	9.4
Medium	25.0	32.5	22.5	20.0
Large	19.8	36.0	23.3	20.9

(continued)

TABLE 87 (continued)

Type of institution	No honors program	Departmental program only	College-wide program only	Departmental and college-wide program
Public	32.4	29.4	17.6	20.6
Private	34.4	37.8	16.7	11.1
Sectarian	37.0	31.5	20.5	11.0
ALL	34.3	32.8	18.1	14.7

Students are selected for most college-wide honors programs in their freshman year, for most departmental programs in their junior year. Admissions procedures and criteria vary greatly from campus to campus; the only evidence used by a majority of departments is the student's grade average (a B average is most commonly required). Table 88 shows when honors students are selected at institutions of different kinds and on what basis they are chosen. (Several departments consider more than one kind of evidence.) Sectarian schools have the highest percentage of college-wide honors programs, and most of them admit students in the freshman year; accordingly, these schools place less emphasis on grades, either because they are not available at that point or because they are not significant.

A salutary trend away from selecting honors students merely on the basis of such "objective" evidence as test scores and grades may be observed at several institutions. Thus, a departmental committee charged with reviewing Duke's "special programs in the major" recommended as follows:

> Candidates for the Honors Program should not be selected on the basis of quality-point ratio alone. The Committee recommends that the Director of Undergraduate Studies, in conference with the tutors, extend invitations to those students who satisfy the University's requirement for admission to an honors program [a B average] and who in their judgment have the ability to complete the program with excellence.

Now recommendations and reports from instructors are given greatest weight by the director and the tutors at Duke. At the University of Connecticut those who administer the college-wide honors program have adopted most of the admissions procedures followed by small, selective colleges--evaluating interviews, letters of recommendation, test scores, high school grades, and class standing--to identify the 100 (out of 2,500) freshmen who will be admitted to their program. To achieve the purposes of that program they believe they must find not only "little achievers" but also students who have some originality of mind and an independent enthusiasm for learning.

The programs to which such superior students are admitted are usually distinguished by the following: (1) special courses or special sections of regular courses, and (2) special provisions or requirements for the degree. Quite predictably, larger schools, which have greater resources, are more likely than medium-size or small to offer special instruction for honors students: 82.4 percent of large, 75.9 percent of medium, and only 49.3

TABLE 88

Procedures for Selecting Honors Students

Type of institution	Selected as: Fr.	Soph.	Jr.	Sr.	Evidence considered: Grade ave.	Recommen-dations	National exams	H.S. record	Other
Public	40.0	32.3	43.1	15.4	67.7	41.5	27.7	12.3	29.3
Private	24.5	15.1	41.5	18.9	67.9	26.4	20.8	11.3	43.4
Sectarian	38.9	16.7	31.0	16.7	50.0	35.7	35.7	23.8	35.7
ALL	38.9	22.5	39.4	16.9	63.1	35.0	27.5	15.0	36.9

TABLE 89

Honors Programs: Special Provisions

Type of institution	No special honors courses	Special sections of regular courses	Seminars in authors	Seminars in genres	Seminars in criticism	Interdisciplinary studies	Other*
Public	20.3	44.9	8.7	7.2	7.2	4.8	20.3
Private	44.6	25.0	8.9	5.4	7.1	1.8	32.1
Sectarian	36.2	46.5	7.0	7.0	4.6	---	18.6
Size of institution							
Small	50.7	28.2	7.0	7.0	4.2	---	25.3
Medium	24.1	48.3	10.3	3.4	6.9	3.4	27.6
Large	17.6	45.6	8.8	7.4	8.8	4.4	42.6
ALL	32.7	38.7	8.3	6.5	5.3	2.4	32.7

*Includes such courses as "Introduction to the Literary Discipline," "Advanced Composition," "The Hero in History," "Ideas in Composition," and "The Twenties." Thematic courses of many kinds are found among special honors seminars.

percent of small institutions provide such special classes. Table 89 shows how many of those schools which have honors programs in English offer special courses of each kind.

Honors seminars, like the senior seminars for regular majors discussed above, are choice teaching assignments, not only because the classes are small and the students are superior but also because these special courses afford ideal occasions for experimentation and exploration.

Among the special provisions or requirements for honors students the most common is some form of independent study. Table 90 shows, however, that departments of different sizes vary considerably in what they demand of their candidates for honors.

TABLE 90

Requirements for Honors Students

Department size	Independent study	Tutorials	Thesis	Comprehensive exam	Other	None
0-4 members	78.9	15.8	15.8	15.8	10.5	10.5
5-9	76.2	19.0	42.8	21.4	9.5	11.9
10-19	62.2	33.3	44.4	31.1	11.1	15.6
20-29	72.0	24.0	40.0	24.0	16.0	12.0
30-99	37.5	43.7	59.4	34.4	15.6	9.4
ALL	64.4	27.6	42.9	26.4	12.3	12.3

Fewer large departments than small require independent study; more large departments provide tutorials and demand a thesis and/or a comprehensive examination--all of which suggests that large departments take their honors programs somewhat more seriously than small.

Two thriving honors programs, one offered by a small college and the other by a large university, will serve to illustrate the form such programs may take and the benefits they may afford well-qualified and well-motivated students. At Swarthmore, where 40 percent of the student body is enrolled in honors progr ms, candidates for honors in English devote as much as half their junior or senior years to special seminars. Four of the six seminars each is permitted to take must be in their major field (and at least one of these must be in Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton); two must be in a minor field. Enrollment in each seminar is limited to seven students, and each meets once a week for four and a half hours. Students write a paper every other week for each seminar, but no honors thesis is required. The comprehensive examination for honors students consists of six three-hour tests, one in each of the fields

covered by the seminars they have taken. As reported above, these examinations are set (and read) by outsiders, who also conduct a twenty-minute oral examination of each candidate and who decide what degree he will be awarded. Discussions in honors seminars at Swarthmore usually address challenging problems raised by the literature; no time in class is wasted on reviewing basic knowledge. So great is the intellectual energy of these honors candidates that they may be expected to prepare themselves for the intensive explorations to which the seminar meetings are devoted. Thus, the honors program at this college involves something like communal independent study.

Prospective honors students at Cornell University are picked in their sophomore year, when they are assigned to special sections (limited to twenty-five students) of the survey or "Great Writers" course. In each term of their junior year they enroll in an honors seminar, which constitutes a quarter of their total program. They may choose from a battery of such courses, each of which is of limited focus (some recent titles: "The Novel of Manners," "The Humanistic Imagination," and "Shakespeare and the Critics") but each of which is also "designed to acquaint the student with the different ways in which literary study may be conducted, with the sort of information one may need in order to appreciate the full import of a particular text, and with some of the value systems that have been applied to literature--in short to show the student how to come to the fullest understanding of a text and how to find the value in the work which the instructor believes the work to have," to quote a departmental announcement. Students are required to write a number of essays, totalling approximately thirty pages for each honors seminar, and the topics for their honors theses (outlined in the spring of their junior year and completed in the fall or winter of their senior year) usually emerge from their work in the seminars. Finally, all must pass the set-book examination described on page 176 above. The forty to fifty students who graduate from Cornell each year with honors in English have thus been treated to a rich if rigorous series of studies: in addition to their regular coursework, they have participated in small group discussions (often conducted by senior professors), have written numerous critical papers, have had a tutorial leading to the completion of a lengthy essay, and have proved their ability to read with insight almost any text which is put in front of them. Departments which can afford programs like Cornell's may be reasonably sure that they have served their best students well.

Of all colleges and universities, 86.2 percent award degrees with honors (variously designated "summa cum laude," "highest honors," "with great distinction," and so forth), but not all which do have honors programs; some give honors to all students who achieve a certain grade-point average in a general program (thus "honors" means only that students have received especially good grades). At many institutions students who complete departmental honors programs successfully are awarded general honors, at some they are awarded only departmental honors, and at others they receive both. Table 91 reveals how many schools of each size and kind subscribe to each policy.

TABLE 91

Honors Awarded

Size of institution	General honors	Departmental honors	Both	Other	No honors
Small	70.4	9.6	8.0	1.6	10.4
Medium	47.4	10.5	10.5	2.6	28.9
Large	50.6	20.8	15.6	1.3	11.7
Type of institution					
Public	50.0	13.3	16.7	1.1	18.9
Private	54.3	19.8	12.4	1.2	12.4
Sectarian	81.2	5.8	1.4	2.9	8.7
ALL	60.4	13.3	10.8	1.7	13.8

The policy of awarding general honors is most popular at small schools, which offer fewest departmental honors programs. Large, public schools, with their many separate programs, are most likely to award departmental honors or both.

CHAPTER IV

THE STATE OF UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH

"It looks like English remains a large, grey, ramshackle institution." That was the conclusion one member of the survey's Advisory Committee reached when he had completed his trip through the preceding sections of this report--and his description will seem accurate to many. About the size of this institution there can be no dispute: the teaching of English to undergraduates is surely one of the two or three largest enterprises in American higher education, and there is little or no evidence that it is diminishing. Fifty-two percent of departments polled in 1967 reported that enrollments were increasing steadily, even rapidly; only 2 percent reported a decline. Fashions in undergraduate enrollments change--in 1969, for example, sociology began to enjoy a boom--but English teachers have a special monopoly on books students want to read (or think they ought to read), and for this reason alone the demand for their courses is not likely to fade away. An ample--perhaps more than ample--supply of Ph.D.'s in English is produced each year, and it would appear that, if funds can be found to pay them, they will have plenty of students to teach. English exists, it is there, like football or some other well-established collegiate institution, and its existence does not seem to be threatened, despite its obvious infirmities.

To some members of the profession those infirmities seem embarrassingly obvious; as they contemplate the edifice which is undergraduate English today they find it grey indeed and badly in need of repair. In particular, they are struck by the fact (which findings in this report may be used to confirm) that few if any major renovations in its structure have been effected in the past two or three decades. Of all departments polled by our survey, 87 percent said that they had recently changed their programs for undergraduates or had introduced innovations,[1] but close examination of the changes reported reveals that most of them were minor adjustments, reshufflings of familiar offerings, or experiments which had been tried and abandoned elsewhere. There are no earlier statistics to compare with those we offer in, say, Table 71 (which describes today's undergraduate curriculum), and therefore we cannot verify or disprove the common suspicion that English programs have remained almost static over the past twenty years. But the very fact that we were able to classify about 80 percent of the

---

[1] Thus, 61.8 percent had altered their freshman programs, 44 percent had revised their general curriculums, and 30.5 percent had changed their programs for the major.

courses now being offered as versions of types which have been standard for decades suggests that that suspicion is well founded. Courses in black literature and in the film may be the only important recent additions to the conventional curriculum. Almost all the rest has been around for many years, and that in itself seems damning evidence to some critics of the profession.

Others are not surprised that catalogue descriptions look much the same today as they did in the thirties and forties. They observe that this profession serves as custodian of the literature of the past, a more or less stable corpus which is best served to students in the portions which compose the conventional curriculum. They note that even those departments which have designed their programs from scratch have found it appropriate to include courses of several common types: thus, the catalogue of Simon Fraser University in British Columbia and of the University of California, Santa Cruz, both new institutions passionately dedicated to innovation, list courses entitled "Shakespeare" and "The Romantics." If the course in Shakespeare is now being taught at those universities--or anywhere else--just as it was taught in the 1930's, that were stagnation indeed. It seems probable, however, that many of those who are now conducting this inevitable course are offering students a brand of Shakespeare which differs from older readings of his works as Kott differs from Bradley. And it is surely not the age of the bottles but the character of the wine they contain which one must judge as one seeks to evaluate current programs in English.

Nevertheless, there is a great yearning for change among college teachers of English throughout the land. Whether it is because they were trained as critics or because the nature of their discipline all but precludes their producing quantifiable evidences of success or failure, the members of this profession are a self-critical, uncertain lot, who continually suppose, most of them, that there must be other, better ways to accomplish their aims. As we travelled about the country conducting interviews for this survey, we were impressed by the fact that those we talked to were often more eager to hear the news from abroad--especially if it were news of innovation--than they were to tell us about their own programs. We encountered very little complacency and many expressions of an almost desperate craving for word of new courses, new programs, new administrative procedures. The public demonstrations of student discontent which have occurred since our interviews can only have intensified that craving.

In their dissatisfaction with at they are now doing and in their nearly frantic efforts to conceive new programs suitable to the disposition of their students and to the tenor of the times, English teachers find they must once again confront and seek solutions to certain large problems which have plagued the profession ever since it reached its maturity early in the century. Our extensive examination of the profession's present practices and our discussions with hundreds of its members lead us to conclude that most of these problems can be reduced to three major questions or concerns, all of which overlap and are interrelated. They are:

1. How to reconcile institutional procedures with the teaching of a subject which is very largely inimical to institutions.

2. How to determine what constitutes good teaching of English.

3. How to define and defend English as a discipline.

To review the specific forms in which these hoary questions arise for today's departments and their members is to describe the present state of undergraduate English.

English and the Institution

As he walks into Section L27 of English 239B (Contemporary Drama) to deliver his fifty-minute lecture on the Theatre of the Absurd to students 110578, 234690, 403921 and so on, Payroll Number 6954021 may note a certain absurdity in his own position, may wonder if these are precisely the right circumstances under which to represent a literature which makes a mock of institutions. As he plans his syllabus for the course in the novel, he may perceive an irony in teaching Hard Times by modern versions of Gradgrind's methods. Or, as he offers his orderly explication of Herrick's "Delight in Disorder," he may ask himself if the institutional procedures to which he is committed and the critical practices they encourage are likely to engender delight of any kind. The English teacher is a man divided. He has a double commitment, and often his twin loyalties seem incompatible. On the one hand, he presents himself to his students as a partisan of literature, a defender of the humane values it expresses, and an enemy of all that inhibits the free exercise of the individual imagination. Like the literature which sustains him, he is pro-Sleary and anti-Gradgrind. On the other hand, he is an officer of an institution, and he makes his living by subscribing to the proposition, fundamental to all institutional operations, that men can collaborate effectively only if they standardize their procedures, objectify their judgments, and impose regularity on human behavior. The institution insists on definition, on consistency, on system. The literature resists all that. At its best it testifies to the enormous variety and versatility of the human mind. Of course, there are always members of the profession--usually called "good administrators"--who are willing to ignore this discrepancy between the spirit of the literature and the means by which it is purveyed; they are the men who want uniformity and predictability, who like to measure and certify, who conceive of education as the orderly production of graduates, not as the lucky coincidence of mind with mind. But there are others, most of them to be found among those younger members of the profession who have not been overly impressed by the programs of graduate studies to which they have been subjected, who live daily with their inability to reconcile their delight in the materials they are privileged to teach with their distaste for the standardization many departments--particularly those in large institutions--find it proper to demand. These ambivalents are the heirs to the humanist tradition, and to them it is an abiding irony that so much of undergraduate English in America today looks very like a bad poem: derivative, factitious, and regular only for the sake of completing its own form.

Recent efforts to liberalize academic procedures and to approach something like "controlled anarchy" in institutions of higher learning may represent responses not only to students' demands for greater freedom but also to their teachers' awareness of the absurdity lurking in any attempt to regiment liberal education. One may be moved to abolish grades, for example, not only because students resent being rated but also because the grades imply absolute judgments good teachers of humane subjects know they cannot make. Similarly, the elimination of requirements--say, those for the major in English--may represent not only a concession to rebellious students but also a recognition of diversity and of the need to live with a pluralistic view of the educational process. Other contemporary events--the abolition of common examinations, the decline of the omnibus textbook, and the growing popularity of the "clustered" university[2]--can also be seen as expressions of a discontent with the systematized teaching of non-systematic matter. The first impulse of those who are now concerned to protect the humanities from excessive regimentation seems to be not to replace existing institutional structures but to decentralize, to refract, to decompose them. Even older, more conservative members of the profession are being moved in increasing numbers to support the redefinition or abolition of academic regulations in the hope that some artificial barriers to teaching and learning may be eliminated.

The Quality of Instruction in English

As we have noted earlier in this report, college teaching is a curious profession in that it continually subjects its members to review and ranking but has little evidence on which to judge them and no well-defined standards of excellence. Even small, intimate departments cannot determine with any assurance the quality of instruction they offer their students. And, in this case, what cannot be measured in miniature cannot be measured at large: no grand survey can ascertain exactly how well college English is being taught throughout the land. We now know that some 1,200 departments conduct courses in American literature, but just how Emerson is faring this week in Florida, in Missouri, and in Oregon no one--not even those who teach him--can presume to say. We can, however, point to certain trends in undergraduate English, and we can speculate on how recent shifts in attitude, policy, and practice may be influencing the quality of teaching.

One such trend, evident in almost every sector we surveyed, is towards a greater regard for individuality and for personality. All of a piece with the movement towards disintegrating institutions, this trend is away

---

[2] Examples are the newest branches of the University of California, at Santa Cruz and San Diego. Following the model of the Claremont complex of private colleges, these institutions are designed to grow cell by cell or college by separate college, precisely for the purpose of encouraging pluralism. Each college added to the cluster will have its own distinctive program in English, but all will partake of the rich diversity which each campus affords.

from wholesale instruction towards multiform programs designed to respect singularity and to encourage direct communication between teacher and student, student and book. It takes many forms: seminars for freshmen and sophomores, tutorials for upper division students, independent study programs, special topics courses, special programs and provisions for minority groups, honors programs, "inner colleges," additional counseling facilities. Even very large universities are adopting these and other means to accommodate the diverse preferences of their students and to reestablish personal contact among members of the academic community.[3] For years English departments have sustained a program which still offers many American undergraduates their only opportunity to experience such contact: freshman English. Now they and their colleagues in other departments seem determined to do at all levels what English teachers have long been doing for freshmen. The motives which underlie this determination may be more or less laudable. Some teachers fear student revolt. Some share the students' aversion to bigness and the anonymity it imposes; administrators and faculty members yearn as the students do for intellectual fellowship in a divisive world. Others are moved by a growing uncertainty that they know what is right for all students. To them it seems arrogant to prescribe for students in the mass when teachers disagree and are unsure of their own values. In a time of general skepticism and unrest, individualized communication, with all its cost and inefficiency, seems especially precious, even essential.

Consistent with this impulse towards atomizing institutions and towards respecting the uniqueness of each student is a view of teaching which, if not radically new, has recently become more widely endorsed. F. Parvin Sharpless summarized this concept when, in 1967, he reported his response to the collection of essays entitled The College Teaching of English. In the course of deploring much of what he found there, Sharpless had occasion to distinguish between a traditional view of teaching and what he called "a kind of existential pedagogy." He characterized the latter as assuming that

> to learn is to develop, to become, to fulfill one's potential, and the means to these ends are not discipline and restraint, but freedom, encouragement, love. Under these terms the teacher neither lectures nor prescribes, because his "truth" is experiential, growing out of situation and context, out of the crossing in time of teacher, student, and work of art. In his students and in himself he values originality, imagination, and evidence of growth. In the classroom he values engagement; his aim is to unsettle the perceptual pattern of the student, but not to prescribe a new one. In his teaching he may discard all lecture notes or prepared outlines, coming to class with a detailed grasp of the work at hand,

---

[3] In 1967 about 80 percent of the departments in our sample reported either that steps were being taken on their campuses to ensure informal contact between teachers and students or that a lack of such contact was not a problem; 35 percent of departments in large universities said they still had not solved the problem.

derived from a fresh study of it, and with his intellect and sensibilities open and receptive to what will happen. He considers that only when students are involved in a kind of spontaneous excitement of learning will the class justify itself.[4]

It is unfortunate that so many of the phrases Sharpless was forced to use in his effort to identify this position--phrases like "to fulfill one's potential," "evidence of growth," and "spontaneous excitement of learning"--have now become clichés, unfortunate because their familiarity may distract us from the import of what is being defined. If this view of teaching were generally adopted--and recent evidence[5] suggests that more and more teachers are finding it congenial--much of undergraduate English might be transformed. Courses and curriculums might be redesigned, examinations and grades might be abolished, and, most important, the daily conduct of classes might be liberalized to encourage more "spontaneous excitement." The fact that some of these reforms have already been effected by individual teachers, departments, and whole colleges attests to the popularity of the cluster of attitudes Sharpless has defined. Reaction against those attitudes and the practices they inspire has set in at some institutions, where a fear of chaos has moved authorities to reinstate absolute requirements and to impose other controls on teaching and learning. But the general drift of our culture is surely away from absolutism of every kind, and the temper of today's students, with their passion for direct experience, seems certain to thwart any effort to return to merely traditional pedagogy. Sharpless concedes that in the new pedagogy "there is a Faustian temptation to ego and vanity which may lead to error, and which will divorce [the teacher] from the minds of others and isolate him inside his self-consciousness"--to which one might add that the cult of immediacy may blind teachers and students to everything which is not present and easily seized. But safeguards against these pitfalls can be installed in almost any course: the man who teaches modern literature, for example, can see to it that many voices, including appropriate voices from the past, are heard in his classroom and can insist that his subjects be "engaged" in its full complexity. If the new "emphasis on experience and involvement,"[6] the "preference for power rather than

---

[4] "Reflections on The College Teaching of English," College English, 29 (October 1967), 34.

[5] For example, the enthusiastic response to criticisms and proposals advanced by such gadflies as Benjamin DeMott, Harold Taylor, and Ken Macrorie, all of whom subscribe to the "existential pedagogy" in one way or another.

[6] Albert Marckwardt's phrase, quoted by James Squire in "The Running Water and the Standing Stone," PMLA, 83 (1968), 525.

knowledge, for experience rather than information, for engagement rather than criticism,"[7] become nothing more than faddish professional mannerisms, they will leave undergraduate English untouched. But if they are expressions of deep conviction and a genuine concern for English, they will affect it profoundly--and probably for the better.

The Vulnerability of English

Meanwhile, departments of English find themselves in a paradoxical position. As we have reported, many have succeeded during the last two decades in divesting themselves of service obligations (including, in a small but growing number of cases, freshman composition) and have moved towards consolidating their domains, delimiting their functions, and defining their discipline. It is now possible to say, for example, that,whatever English departments are supposed to do, it does not include teaching oratory and certain kinds of commercial writing. But all the while they have been struggling to reassert their integrity these departments have been subjected to new influences and demands, with the result that the question, "What is English?" has never been more urgent than it is today nor more difficult to answer.

As posed by some critics of the profession, both inside and outside its ranks, that question quickly becomes, "What does the study of English have to do with the rest of modern life?" Simply to say that it is part of modern life--one of many discrete and legitimate intellectual activities in which men may engage--does not satisfy such critics. They want assurance that English is conceived and practiced not as an autotelic discipline but as a means of comprehending, of controlling, and thus of enhancing life beyond the printed page. Languge is a medium, they continually remind us, and literature is a representation of human experience. To study either as if it were a mere artifact--"a fascinating clockworks that [tells] no time," in Benjamin DeMott's clever phrase--is to neglect what the medium conveys and to ignore what the literature represents. And in the opinion of these critics English teachers are often guilty of just that. DeMott himself makes this charge.

> I believe the English teacher isn't usually and primarily engaged in the activity of encouraging students to find the bearing of this book and that poem and this "composition" on their own lives. . . .I believe the English teacher is inhibited about giving himself to the labor of drawing men into an effort to reflect upon and understand their own experience.[8]

Now,the complaint that English has been "emptied of content" and that it has become "an enclosed, sealed-off enterprise, locked into terms of discourse, which . . . are too unrelenting, self-referring to be worth

---

[7] Arthur Eastman, quoted ibid.

[8] "Reading, Writing, Reality, Unreality . . ." Super-grow: Essays and Reports on Imagination in America (New York, 1969), p.143.

praise"[9] is not new. As Richard Ellmann has said in response to DeMott's attack, "We know that every twenty years there has to be this crying out."[10] Indeed, it might be revealing to make an historical study of the criticism DeMott is the latest to revive: perhaps it could be determined that English is always accused of parochialism, of abdicating its responsibilities to the humanities, and of neglecting "life" when life in the nation becomes especially confused and frightening. Certainly English is unusually vulnerable to such criticism. It is, as we have said, the one discipline which has something all others must use; therefore it is everyone's property and everyone's concern. And, when modern men feel an urgent need for enlightenment or simply for some expression of those matters which trouble them, they often turn to literature as men of an earlier age turned to religion.[11] If they then find, or think they find, the priests of English hoarding the sacred texts and practicing arcane critical rites, their resentment will be great--and perhaps justified.

In 1969 and 1970 some such resentment coincided with widespread demands for social reforms, and this has intensified the pressures on English. Because of the exigencies of the times, it is now argued, English teachers can no longer be permitted the luxury of teaching language as language and literature as literature; instead, they must contribute in every way they can to the amelioration of social conditions. Linguists must work to combat false concepts of dialect and the injustices those concepts engender; black literature must be taught to "sensitize" students and thus to improve racial relations; courses in urban literature must be offered to illuminate the problems of the cities. No opportunity to "politicalize" English and to relate it to the social concerns of the day should be overlooked.[12] Those who take this position insist that teaching is a political act, whether or

---

[9] Pp. 142, 144.

[10] As quoted in Newsweek, October 13, 1969, p. 72.

[11] The British educator, Denys Thompson, writes, "Literature is not a substitute for religion. But inescapably literature provides a compass and helps to supply the sense of direction that used to derive from religious and traditional sanctions." ("Aims and Purposes of Teaching English in Britain," A Common Purpose, edited by James R. Squire [Champaign, 1966], p.7.) It is also noteworthy that literary texts are now being used as illustrative documents in many courses in religion.

[12] Thus, the program for the 1970 meeting of the Northeast Modern Language Association included a "Special Seminar on the Teaching of Literature and the Environmental Crisis." Among the questions to be discussed was, "Should the pressing nature of the problem effect an alteration in the nature of our course offerings or major programs?"

not it is intended to be: to read a poem one way--say, with attention to structure and the interaction of words--is not to read it another way and perhaps to be guilty of complacency or indifference to human suffering. Simply to take delight in aesthetic success seems to them an aristocratic, belletristic indulgence.

Two objections to this argument may be raised: the first is that it treats literature almost exclusively as document and assumes, quite naively, that social therapy can be effected simply by confronting students with the right documents, properly interpreted. But such indoctrination may offend as often as it persuades, and it reduces education to the acquisition of social attitudes deemed "correct" by official interpretors. The second objection follows from this: it is that to limit English to the study of documents pertinent to today's social problems would be to impoverish the discipline while pretending to enrich it. At present English teachers and their students can do many things, from analyzing language to exploring the relation of literature to life. Not everything they do will prepare them in any easily discernible way for enlightened social action. But even their most bookish activities--disentangling a metaphor, for example, or clarifying an episode in literary history--may help to develop powers of discrimination and critical habits of mind which are needed today just as much as mere awareness of injustice. Those who would convert English into courses in Current Events would deny it riches which, though they have always embarrassed it, have always given it strength.

"Why should things--objects, feelings, situations--not stand in better with English teachers than they do?" asks Benjamin DeMott.[13] The answer, of course, is that English teachers are on the side both of things and of the words that represent them. Their office is to mediate between words and things and to teach students not to confuse the two. The future of English will depend not on how many things can be brought into the classroom but on how many fine minds can be enlisted to serve as equilibrists between words and things, between the past and the present, between reading about life and living it.

---

[13] Supergrow, p.152.

APPENDIX

THE GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Institution _____

Address _____

Total Undergraduate Enrollment at Your Institution _____

Do you have a graduate program in English? Yes _____ No _____
If so, which degrees do you offer? M.A. _____ M.A.T. _____ Ph.D. _____

Name(s) and Title(s) of Person(s) Completing This Questionnaire: _____

_____

_____

N.B. Please initial separately those answers which express personal, not official, opinions and policies. If you wish us to treat all your answers as confidential, please place a "C" in the following blank. _____ If you wish us to treat individual answers as confidential, please place a "C" beside each of those answers. Information in confidential answers will be included in statistics, but names of institutions and respondents will not be published.

Some universities and/or their branches have more than one Department of English or staff of English teachers. We ask you to report only on your own local or immediate department. Please indicate as clearly as possible precisely which department or staff is described by your answers to this questionnaire.

_____

_____

Are there other Departments of English or staffs of English teachers in your institution? Yes _____ No _____ If so, to which colleges, divisions or departments do they belong?

_____

_____

Do any of these departments or staffs teach English only at the freshman level? Yes _____ No _____ If so, which do? _____

_____

Which type of academic calendar (for example, semester, trimester, quarter) does your institution have? _____

Unless you indicate otherwise, we will assume that all the data you provide in your answers (for example, information on teaching loads, course credits, etc.) pertain to this academic calendar.

PART I: THE DEPARTMENT'S PROFESSIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. Is yours a separate Department of English? Yes _____ No _____ If not, which of the following most closely describes the administrative unit of which you are a part?

   Department of Humanities _____

   Department of Language and Literature _____

   Department of Language Arts _____

   Department of Communications _____

   Other (Please specify.) _____

   If yours is not a separate department, please explain the reasons for combining English with other disciplines in the administrative structure of your institution.

   _____

2. How many full-time teachers of English are there in your department or staff? _____ Please give additional information about them by completing the following form.

RANK	NUMBER	SEX		HIGHEST DEGREES		
		Number		Number		
		M.	F.	B.A.	M.A.	Ph.D.
Professor						
Associate Professor						
Assistant Professor						
Instructor						
Other (Please specify.)						

How many members of your department whom you wanted to keep were "hired away" by other institutions during the past two years (1965-67)? _____

3. Is yours the largest department, in number of full-time teachers, in the college or university college (for example, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) to which it belongs? Yes _____ No _____ If not, which departments are larger? _____

_____

4. What is the normal and expected teaching load for members of your department? _____

_____

Are exceptions made? That is, are course loads reduced for faculty members in your department who have special administrative duties, unusual counselir or tutoring assignments, or research commitments? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please explain your policies for exempting faculty members from the normal and expected teaching load you have defined above.

_____

Does your teaching load compare favorably with that of other departments in your institution? Yes _____ No _____ If not, please explain specific variations or inequities.

_____

_____

5. The following questions pertain to your hiring procedures. If you find that you need new staff members, in what month do you usually begin your search? _____

By what date do you usually expect to have filled your vacancies? _____

What means or procedures do you use to find suitable candidates? Please indicate which procedures you follow.

Replies to letters of inquiries from applicants _____

Interviews at the December meeting of the MLA _____

Visits by the Chairman to other campuses _____

Personal appeals to acquaintances _____

Circularizing _____

Listing in the Association of Departments of English's list of vacancies _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

How many letters of inquiry from applicants did you receive this year (1966-67)? _____

Is it your practice to invite candidates to your campus before offering appointment? Please answer by rank.

	Always	Usually	Rarely	Never	Expenses Paid
Professor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Associate Professor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assistant Professor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Instructor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Please specify.) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Who interviews the candidates who are brought to your campus? _____

Complaints have been made that the increasing tendency to make appointments at an early date has been unfair to candidates because it limits their choices and unfair to chairmen because it requires them to devote so much of the year to recruiting. Do you think this is an important problem?

From the candidate's point of view: Yes _____ No _____
From the Chairman's point of view: Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

Would you favor the establishment, on a national scale, of a system comparable to that already established for graduate fellowships, whereby no candidate need commit himself earlier than an agreed-upon date (for example, February 1)? Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

Would you favor the establishment, on a national scale, of some agreed-upon dates (other than the usual May 1st date) after which a member of a department could not resign his appointment (with a saving clause to cover extraordinary cause)? Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

What is your department's policy or tradition concerning the hiring, retaining and promoting of female teachers?

Comments: _____

Is your department allowed and willing to hire a husband and his wife if both are considered qualified? Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

Certain departments tell us that when they proceed to fill their vacancies they tend to give first consideration to the applicants' specialities; others say they are more concerned with general competence and versatility. Which of these describes your practices?

Look for specialists in particular fields _____

Look for teachers of general ability _____

Comments: _____

_____

Does your department have a fixed "table of organization" or quota for each rank? Yes _____ No _____

Are you currently "hiring to keep"? That is, do you expect that the teachers you hire at junior levels will have full opportunity to achieve promotion and tenure? Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

_____

Have you hired anyone at the rank of professor or associate professor during the past three years (1964-67)? Yes _____ No _____ If so, how many have you hired at each of these ranks?

Number hired as professors _____

Number hired as associate professors _____

Does your department encounter special difficulties in staffing particular courses in its undergraduate curriculum? That is, is it unusually difficult to find instructors competent and willing to teach, say, your courses in linguistics, or in medieval literature, or in modern fiction? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please indicate precisely which courses present such difficulties and describe the difficulties which arise.

_____

6. The following questions pertain to your policies on tenure and promotion. Is tenure granted to faculty members at your institution? Yes _____ No _____ If so, at what point in his career is a faculty member eligible for tenure? _____

_____

Are faculty members dismissed if they have not achieved tenure by a certain point? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please explain.

_____

By which of the following procedures are departmental decisions on tenure and promotion reached?

	Tenure	Promotion
Decision of the Chairman	_____	_____
Decision of the Chairman and an advisory committee	_____	_____
Decision of the Chairman and all those superior in rank to the candidate	_____	_____
Decision of an elected committee	_____	_____

Other (Please specify.) _____

What criteria are used in deciding whether or not a teacher should be awarded promotion and/or tenure? If possible, please list in order of importance. _____

Does the Administration of your institution accede to your department's recommendations on tenure and promotion?

	Always	Usually	Seldom
Tenure	_____	_____	_____
Promotion	_____	_____	_____

Comments: _____

By what procedures does the Administration reach its final decisions concerning promotion and tenure? _____

_____

7. The following questions pertain to the chief officer of your department. Is this officer called a Chairman _____ or a Head _____? How is this officer selected? _____

_____

Is the appointment for infinite duration? Yes _____ No _____ If it is for a period of years, how many? _____ Can the appointment be renewed? Yes _____ No _____ Is the office a rotating one? Yes _____ No _____ Is a special stipend attached to the office? Yes _____ No _____ What is the Chairman's teaching load (in class hours per week)? _____

Is an Associate or Assistant Chairman appointed? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what are his principal responsibilities? _____

_____

_____

Is his appointment essentially a permanent one? Yes _____ No _____ If not, how long does he usually serve? _____ Is a special stipend attached to this office? Yes _____ No _____ What is the Associate Chairman's teaching load (in class hours per week)? _____

What kind of a person is most suitable for the office of Chairman or Head? More specifically, is it essential that he be an outstanding teacher-scholar?

Essential _____

Desirable _____

Less important than that he be an efficient administrator _____

Comment: _____

_____

Should the Chairman or Head be an independent leader or a spokesman for and representative of his colleagues in the department?

Independent leader _____

Spokesman and representative _____

Some combination of both (Please explain.) _____

_____

8. Does your department have any of the following committees--or others? (Please check.)

Executive Committee _____

Committee on Tenure _____

Committee on Promotions _____

Graduate Committee _____

Committee on the English Major _____

Committee on the Curriculum _____

Committee on Teacher Preparation _____

Committee on Freshman English _____

Committee on Recruiting _____

Committee on the Budget _____

Committee on the Library _____

Committee on the Honors Program _____

Committee on Publications _____

Committee on Grants _____

Committee on Committees _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

Does your department hold regularly scheduled meetings of the whole departme
Yes _____ No _____ If so, how often? _____

How are most of your important decisions on departmental policies and practices reached?

By the Chairman alone _____ By the committees alone _____

By the Chairman and the Committees _____ By the department as a whole _____

Comment: _____

9. The following questions pertain to the assignment of courses and to procedures for effecting uniformity in sectioned courses other than Freshman English. (If you have no such courses, please proceed directly to Question 10.) Which of the following are considered when courses are assigned to members of the department? (Please rank in order of importance, if possible.)

Available competence of the staff _____

Individual preferences _____

Curriculum balance _____

Rank _____

Seniority _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

_____

Are courses rotated (that is, assigned to different members of the department in different years) or are they usually assigned to the same teachers each year?

Courses are rotated _____ Courses are not rotated _____

Comment: _____

_____

Which of the following measures, if any, do you employ to achieve some degree of uniformity in courses with multiple sections?

A common syllabus _____

Common lectures, attended by all students enrolled in the course _____

A common set of readings _____

Common examinations _____

Staff meetings _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

No formal attempt to achieve uniformity is made. _____

Who is responsible for the selection and adoption of textbooks in courses with multiple sections?

The entire department _____

The department Chairman _____

One member of the department appointed by the Chairman _____

A committee of those teaching in the course _____

Individual instructors teaching in the course _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

10. The following questions pertain to the department's authority in selected matters of its concern. The numbers following each item refer to these procedures:

1=Department has complete autonomy.

2=Action is initiated by departmental procedures and approved by the administration.

3=Action is initiated by the department Chairman alone and approved by the administration.

4=Action is initiated by the administration and communicated to the department or department Chairman.

5=Action is initiated jointly by the department and the administration.

6=Some other procedure (Please specify.) _____

Please circle the number appropriate in each case.

a. Recruiting new members of the staff 1 2 3 4 5 6

b. Selecting new members of the staff 1 2 3 4 5 6

c. Appointing new members of the staff 1 2 3 4 5 6

d. Establishing rank and salary for new members of staff 1 2 3 4 5 6

e. Granting released time for research, writing, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6

f. Setting sizes of classes 1 2 3 4 5 6

g. Setting teaching loads 1 2 3 4 5 6

h. Setting modes of instruction (for example, lecture, discussion, TV, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5 6

i. Making course revisions 1 2 3 4 5 6

j. Adding or dropping a course from the curriculum
1 2 3 4 5 6

k. Adding or dropping a program (for example, an honors program)
1 2 3 4 5 6

11. How would you rate the facilities your institution's library provides for undergraduate students in English?

Outstanding _____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____

Are any noteworthy or unusual facilities provided for undergraduate students in English? If so, please describe them. _____

_____

Is your library deficient in any way which hampers the teaching of English to undergraduates? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please explain. _____

_____

PART II: THE GENERAL ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT

12. Which of the following courses or programs does your department offer as part of its regular curriculum during the school year? (Please check.)

Journalism _____ Writing clinic _____

Methods of teaching English _____ Business correspondence and reports _____

Speech _____ Technical writing _____

Children's literature _____ English for foreign students _____

Other special courses or programs of this nature. (Please specify.)

_____

Approximately what percentage of your department's total teaching load is devoted to conducting these courses? _____%

13. Which of the following extra-curricular services are performed by members of your department? (Please check.)

	Assigned	Voluntary
Advising the student newspaper	_____	_____
Advising the year-book or annual	_____	_____

	Assigned	Voluntary
Advising the literary magazine(s)	_____	_____
Arranging lectures and readings	_____	_____
Judging contests	_____	_____
Assisting public relations	_____	_____
Other (Please specify.) _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

14. Does your department offer extension or adult education courses? Yes ____ No _____ If so, are these regular college courses or special courses arranged for the program?

Regular courses _____ Special courses _____ Both _____

Are these credit or non-credit courses?

Credit _____ Non-credit _____ Both _____

Are such courses considered part of the regular load of a faculty member or are they considered outside the regular load?

Part of the regular load _____

In addition to regular load with added compensation or released time _____

Other arrangements (Please specify.) _____

15. Does your department offer correspondence courses? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, are these credit or non-credit courses?

Credit _____ Non-credit _____ Both _____

Are such courses considered part of the regular load of a faculty member or are they considered outside the regular load?

Part of regular load _____

In addition to regular load with added compensation or released time _____

Other arrangements (Please specify.) _____

_____

16. Does your department participate in a program of articulation with the high schools? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, in what way? _____

_____

17. The following questions pertain to your program for freshmen.

Do you offer Remedial English? Yes _____ No _____ If so, which students take that course?

_____

_____

What is the content of the course in Remedial English? _____

_____

What is the average size of your classes in Remedial English? _____
Is credit given for this course? Yes _____ No _____ If so, how much credit is given? _____ Are students required to pay a special fee for the course in Remedial English? Yes _____ No _____

Please describe your regular (that is, not remedial or honors) course(s) for freshmen. What is the content of the course(s)? _____

_____

What kinds of textbooks (for example, a rhetoric, a handbook, casebooks, an anthology of essays or literary works) are used in these courses?

_____

How much writing is required each term in these courses? _____

_____

Are students <u>required</u> to take freshman English at your institution? Yes _____ No _____ If so, which of the courses described above are they required to take? _____

_____

Are exemptions from this requirement granted? Yes _____ No _____ If so, on what basis and from which courses are students exempted? _____

_____

Are students who have passed Advanced Placement courses in high school and who have taken the College Entrance Examination Board's Advanced Placement examination in English granted exemption from your freshman course(s)? Yes _____ No _____ If so, on what basis is this exemption granted? _____

_____

Do you award <u>course credits</u> for Advanced Placement work? Yes _____ No _____ If so, on what basis are these credits awarded? _____

_____

How many students entering your institution last year (1966) had taken the College Entrance Examination Board's Advanced Placement examination in English? _____

Who teaches your courses for freshmen?

All members of the department _____

Most members of the department _____ (Please give exceptions.

_____

Members of the department and graduate students. _____ (Pleas give ratio.) _____

Graduate students or part-time teachers only. _____

Comment: _____

What percentage of your department's total teaching load is devoted to freshman English? _____%

Are your courses for freshmen conceived primarily as preparation for further work in English or as general training in verbal skills?

Preparation for further work in English _____

General training in verbal skills _____

Both (Please explain.) _____

Have you recently made any major changes in your freshman program? Yes _____ No _____. If so, please explain the changes and your reasons for making them. _____

18. Does your department offer or participate in general education or "Humanities" courses? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please describe those courses and give the level (freshman, sophomore, junior or senior) for each. _____

Are any of these courses required of all or most students? Yes _____ No _____ If so, which are required? _____

What percentage of your department's total teaching load is devoted to these general education courses? _____%

19. Does your department offer or participate in interdisciplinary courses or courses which combine and relate the disciplines (other than those courses described under Question 18)? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please describe those courses and give the class level for each. _____

_____

Are any of these courses required of all or most students? Yes _____ No _____ If so, which are required? _____

_____

What percentage of your department's total teaching load is devoted to these interdisciplinary courses? _____%

20. Does your department offer specially planned sequences of courses for students who minor in English? Yes _____ No _____ If so, are the courses in these sequences open to all students or restricted to students majoring in disciplines other than English?

Open to all students _____

Restricted to students with specific majors _____

Both _____

Who controls the selection and content of courses in these minor sequences?

The English Department _____.

The other department(s) _____

Joint control _____

21. Does your department offer or participate in a program for the preparation of teachers of English? Yes _____ No _____ If so, is your program for teachers separate and distinct from that offered by the Department or School of Education? Yes _____ No _____ If it is not, please explain how this joint program is administered. _____

_____

Is it possible for students to major in the teaching of English in the Department or School of Education? Yes _____ No _____ If so, how many credit hours of subject-matter courses in English (not in teaching methods) are required for the Department of Education's major in the teaching of English? _____

To what extent is this program influenced by certification requirements? Please explain. _____

_____

If your department has its own program for students who plan to teach English (as distinguished from the Department of Education's program), which, if any, of the following are required for admission?

Special matriculation _____ Junior status _____

Freshman English _____ Foreign language _____

Sophomore status _____

Minimum grade average (Please specify and interpret.) _____

_____

Completion of other specific courses (Please list.) _____

_____

Other requirements (Please specify.)_____

_____

No specific requirements _____

Which courses are students enrolled in this program required to take?

Descriptive Title	Credit Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____

What distinguishes the courses for English majors from the courses for non-English majors?

Larger reading assignments in courses for majors _____

More difficult reading in courses for majors _____

More specialized reading in courses for majors _____

More papers assigned in courses for majors _____

More difficult writing assignments in courses for majors _____

Higher grading standards in courses for majors _____

Different teaching procedures used (Please specify.) _____

_____

Classes of different sizes (Please specify.) _____

_____

Other differences (Please specify.) _____

_____

Are students who do not intend to major in English required to take English courses beyond the freshman level, or do certain courses in English beyond the freshman level fall within certain "group requirements"?
Yes _____ No _____ If so, which courses are required and how?

Descriptive Title	Requirement	Credit Hours
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What percentage of your current total enrollment in undergraduate courses above the freshman level are students not majoring in English?

Which courses attract the largest numbers of students not majoring in English?

Descriptive Title	Average Size of Classes
_____	_____
_____	_____

PART III: THE MAJOR IN ENGLISH

23. When do students at your institution normally declare their majors or fields of concentration? _____

Are students permitted to declare their majors at an earlier time? Yes _____ No _____ If so, how early in their college careers can they declare their majors, and what special provisions are made for early majors? _____

_____

How many students (at all class levels) are currently majoring in English at your institution? _____

If yours is a coeducational institution, what percentage of those majoring in English are males? _____%

What is the relative size (in enrollments) of the following programs when compared to other majors in your college or in the university college to which your department belongs?

Major in English: Rank among departments _____

Major in English preparing for teaching (excluding the above): Rank _____

24. Please evaluate the students majoring in English on your campus in comparison with the whole student body of your college or of the university college to which your department belongs. Which of the following most nearly describes your majors as a group?

The most competent students in the college _____

The most competent students in the college with a few exceptions _____

A representative group, which includes students of every competence _____

Mostly students of mediocre or inferior competence with a few exceptions _____

The least competent students in the college _____

Other (Please explain.) _____

25. Does the major in English attract any particular type of student (for example, dilettantes, refugees from other disciplines, female students of low competence) which compel you to lower your standards for the major? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please identify these students and explain. _____

_____

26. Are you required to admit to your program all students who wish to majo in English? Yes_____ No _____ If not, what admissions requirements must be met by students? _____

_____

27. Are majors in English required to take certain courses before graduatio Yes _____ No _____ If so, what courses are required?

Descriptive Title	Credit Hours	Ord
_____	_____	___
_____	_____	___

Must these courses be taken in a certain sequence or order? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please indicate the required sequence under "Order" above.

28. What is the total number of credit hours in English required for English majors? _____

29. Is there a foreign language requirement for English majors? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what is the requirement? _____

_____

Is this a departmental requirement or a college-wide requirement?

Departmental requirement _____ College-wide requirement _____

30. Must majors in English pass a comprehensive written examination before graduation? Yes _____ No _____ If so, is this a departmental requirement Departmental _____ College-wide _____ At what point in their college careers do students normally take this examination? _____

_____

Is this examination based on a prescribed syllabus? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what subjects or fields does this syllabus cover? _____

_____

_____

What is the duration and scope of the comprehensive examination?

Approximately what percentage of students taking the comprehensive examination in recent years have failed? _____%

Must majors in English pass an oral examination? Yes _____ No _____
If so, what is the duration and scope of the examination?

Does your department invite faculty members from other schools to participate in written or oral examinations of majors in English?
Yes _____ No _____

Please list and describe any other departmental requirements which the major in English must fulfill before graduation.

Is there a maximum number of courses in English which a major may take? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what is that maximum? _____

Approximately what percentage of your majors graduating in recent years went on to do graduate work in English? _____%

Do you distinguish in any way between your undergraduate majors who intend to do graduate work in English and those who do not? Yes _____
No _____ If so, what special provisions are made for those majors who plan to do graduate work in English?

Does the need to prepare some students for graduate work in English influence your general program for the major in any significant ways?
Yes _____ No _____ If so, please explain.

31. Who advises the majors in English?

Members of the English Department _____

Members of other departments _____

Professional academic advisors _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

_____

Does your department offer career counseling (that is, counseling about graduate school, fellowships, etc.)? Yes _____ No _____ If so, how is such counseling done?

_____

32. Does your institution have an honors program? Yes _____ No _____ If so, which type of honors program is provided for the major in English?

Departmental honors program _____

College-wide honors program _____

Both _____

Do you offer special courses in English for honors students? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please list these courses.

Descriptive Title	Credit Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____

What other special provisions are made for honors students in English? (Please describe.)

Tutorials _____

Independent study _____

Undergraduate thesis _____

Comprehensive examinations _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

_____

What criteria are used in selecting honors students in English?

_____

At what point in their college careers are they selected?

_____

Must a student major in English in order to take honors courses in English? Yes _____ No _____ If not, please explain.

Does your institution give degrees with honors? Yes _____ No _____
If so, on what basis are they awarded? _____

33. Which courses are advised or prescribed for sophomores who intend to major in English?

Descriptive Title	Credit Hours	Advised (Please check.)	Required (Please check.)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please double check those courses which are specially designed for sophomores or limited to sophomores.

What determines the choice and design of those courses you recommend for sophomores who intend to major in English? Do you believe, for example, that such students should acquire a broad knowledge of literature at this point in their educational careers? Or do you believe that they should begin to specialize by taking, for example, a course in Shakespeare? Please be specific.

_____

_____

Is provision for independent study made in your program? Yes _____ No _____ If so, under what conditions is independent study permitted?

_____

_____

34. Does your department offer or participate in a separate undergraduate program in American Studies? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what are the special requirements and provisions of that program?

_____

_____

Who administers this program?

The English Department _____

Another department (Please specify.) _____

A separate department _____

A combination of departments (Please specify.) _____

_____

Other (Please specify.) _____

_____

35. Does your department offer or participate in a separate undergraduate program in Comparative Literature? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what are the special requirements and provisions of that program?

_____

_____

Who administers this program?

The English Department _____

Another department (Please specify.) _____

A separate department _____

A combination of departments (Please specify.) _____

_____

Other (Please specify.) _____

_____

36. Have you recently added to your curriculum any unusual or experimental courses? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please describe those courses.

_____

_____

37. What significant trends in enrollment, if any, has your department observed within the last five years? Please be as comprehensive and as specific as you can.

_____

_____

Which of the following do you take most heavily into account as you plan or revise your course offerings for undergraduates? Please rank by number (1 = most important).

	Rank
The need to present a comprehensive set of courses	_____
The available competence of the staff	_____
The requests of individual staff members	_____
Students' preferences for courses	_____
Other (Please specify.) _____	_____

_____

38. Do students who transfer from other colleges (including junior colleges) present special problems for your department? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please explain the problems.

_____

_____

39. What accomplishments and orders of knowledge (for example, "ability to make an informed reading of a poem," or "knowledge of the chronology of English literature") do you expect your majors in English to have when they graduate? Please give your own best definition and explanation.

_____

_____

40. Does your department employ help (for example, graduate students) in correcting papers and examinations? Yes _____ No _____ If so, what help do you employ and what duties do you delegate to these assistants?

_____

_____

41. Is provision made in your program(s) for undergraduates to study abroad? Yes _____ No _____ If so, please describe the foreign study programs which relate to the major in English.

_____

_____

PART V: GENERAL QUESTIONS

43. What are your department's criteria for good teaching?

_____

_____

Which of the following means do you use to evaluate an instructor's competence as a teacher?

Informal personal contacts _____

Classroom visitation _____

Review of assignments and examinations _____

Students' evaluations solicited by the department _____

Students' evaluations solicited by the administration _____

Students' evaluations published independently _____

Other (Please specify.) _____

_____

43. Is a lack of informal contact between English teachers and their students a problem on your campus? In general, Yes _____ No _____ If so, what steps has your department taken (or would it like to take) to improve its informal relationship with students?

_____

_____

44. Please state your department's understanding of its role in the total program for undergraduates offered by your institution. Is its function simply to provide instruction in a specific discipline, or does it have other, larger responsibilities?

_____

45. Does your department contribute in specific ways to the general cultural life of your community? Yes _____ No _____ If so, in what ways does it contribute?

_____

46. What major problems, if any, does your department currently confront?

_____

47. What important changes or major innovations in your programs for undergraduates have you recently inaugurated or do you presently contemplate?

_____

_____

PART IV: PROCEDURES IN INDIVIDUAL COURSES

This chart is designed to elicit a great deal of routine information in a minimum of space. Please list your undergraduate courses above the freshman level by descriptive titles (not by catalogue numbers) in the categories which seem most appropriate, then complete the entries opposite each course as well as you can.

TYPE	DESCRIPTIVE TITLE	CREDIT HOURS	TOTAL ANNUAL ENROLL-MENT	AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	TEACHING PROCEDURES*	NUMBER PAPERS REQUIRED	NUMBER OF EXAMS	PAPERS CORRECTED BY	RANK(S) OF TEACHERS
Survey Courses									
Period Courses									
Courses in Individual Authors or Groups of Authors									
Courses in Genres									
Courses in Literary Criticism									

Courses in Linguistics and the History of Language									
Courses in Creative Writing									
Courses in Advanced Composition All Other Courses									

*Please use the following code: L = Lecture; D = Discussion; LS = Lecture and Section; V = Varies